

**BENGAL:**

**EARLY  
NINETEENTH  
CENTURY**

## BENGAL : EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

In this volume, an attempt has been made by the editor, to present to researchers and scholars of today, some of the finest writings of H.L.V. Derozio, the stormy petrel of Bengal Renaissance, and those of his ardent admirers, better known collectively as Young Bengal. The volume includes elaborate, selected reprints from the famous journal *THE KALEIDOSCOPE* ( 1829—30 ), edited by Derozio—selections that are not available in print. It also includes the complete proceedings on the origin and formation of the Bengal British India Society ( 1843 )—in a sense, the first political organisation in this country, in the modern period. The volume also includes a number of articles, advocating social emancipation of Hindoo women, in the pages of the *REFORMER* ( 1833 )—a journal run by Prosunno Kumar Tagore, a relative of Dwarkanath and a friend of Rammohun. Both these sets of selections are also no longer available in print for the public and are being made available once again to the contemporary scholars. The volume also contains other rare and valuable reprints. It also contains an introductory note by the editor, who a decade back, in 1965 edited and published the complete Proceedings of the Derozian Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge ( 1838—43 ) and this may truly be said to be the follow-up companion volume of the former.

**Bengal : Early Nineteenth Century**  
(Selected Documents)

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(Selected Documents)

*Editor*

GAUTAM CHATTOPADHYAY



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## PREFACE

Over a decade back, in 1965, when I edited and published the Discourses of the Derozian Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (1838-43), in my introduction to that volume ("Awakening in Bengal in Early Nineteenth Century"), there was a promise that a companion second volume, containing more material of the same period would be brought out soon. Many factors, over some of which I had no control, delayed that publication and it is only now, in 1978, that I have been able to keep my old promise. For this, my heartfelt thanks to Shri Susanta Ghosh and Shri Arun Ghosh, without whose co-operation and enthusiasm, this volume could never have been brought out this year.

My warm thanks also go to my dear friend Dr. Blair Kling, Illinois University, USA, who helped me to get hold of some of these material. Dr. Sumit Sarkar, Dr. Barun De, Shri Asok Sen, Shri Sunil Munsii, Shri Ranajit Das Gupta, and Shri Nripen Bandopadhyaya gave many useful and valuable suggestions—formal thanks cannot repay my debt to these long-standing friends. My affectionate thanks also go to my young pupils and colleagues, Messers Debabrata Majumdar, Debaprosad Ghosh and Kanailal Chattopadhyay. My wife, Manju, ferreted out the *Reformer* from the archives of the National Library, Calcutta and obtained the articles for my use. She has been my best associate in all my work of historical investigation and research and I can only hope that this will continue for a very long time. My thanks are also due to the Librarians and staff of the National Library, Calcutta, of the Uttarpara Public Library, of the Raja Radhakanto Dev Library, Sovabazar and the Carey Memorial Library, Serampore. As for the contents of the book, they speak for themselves. Moreover, there is a fairly long introduction



by the editor. I can only hope that this book, together with the earlier companion volume, shall be useful as source-material to all scholars of the social history of Bengal in early Nineteenth Century.

2 Palm Place  
Calcutta-700019  
May, 1978

Gautam Chattopadhyay

## INTRODUCTION

I

The second quarter of the Nineteenth Century, was a restless, formative period, as far as the educated middle-class of Bengal was concerned. The headquarters of British power in Bengal, the city of Calcutta, had become a great metropolis, where gradually came the richest of Bengal's citizens — *landlords, men of professional classes and others*. Naturally enough, it was in Calcutta, that slowly sprang up an educated middle class, having largely been reared in the colonial pattern of Western education. By 1820, there were quite a few schools in Calcutta, centring round the Hindoo College, established in 1817. Within a decade of its existence, the Hindoo College had become the centre, with the dynamic personality of H. L. V. Derozio as the axis, round of whom gathered the youthful liberals of Bengal—later on to be referred to simply as Young Bengal—holding aloft the torch of a new type of social and political awakening. No doubt, this awakening had severe limitations and weaknesses, but its importance, nonetheless, should not be underrated.

A basic problem for all scholars and research-workers connected with the history of Bengal in the first half of Nineteenth Century, has been the paucity of source-materials, which could give us an insight into the minds of Derozio and his admirers, better known as Young Bengal. Such source-materials alone could bring objectivity and proper balance in all work of historical investigations.

Much work has been done in this field and this has considerably enriched our store-house of knowledge about Bengal in early Nineteenth Century, but if anything that

has made assessment of Derozio and the Derozians, an even more controversial subject. Eminent scholars, young and old, Indian and non-Indian, have joined the fray, among whom some of the most noteworthy are Susobhan Sarkar, Benoy Ghosh, Asok Sen, Sumit Sarkar, Barun De, K. N. Pannikar, Blair Kling, David Kopf and a host of others.

At one end, some have characterized Derozio as the man who first planted the seed of patriotism in the minds of the young pupils of Hindoo College; on the other, some have characterised the Derozians as pathetic imitators of bourgeois liberalism of the West. But almost all of them have agreed that it is very difficult today to reconstruct what Derozio and the Derozians themselves felt about cardinal social, economic and political questions, affecting Bengal and India, in the absence of adequate source materials.

As one of the most brilliant of our young scholars rightly observe: "Wide gaps still exist in our knowledge of Young Bengal. Apart from the *SAGK Proceedings* and the *Bengal Spectator* files, made easily available recently by Gautam Chattopadhyay and Benoy Ghosh, really first hand materials about the Derozians exist today only in stray extracts..... Diligent research may yet unearth the files of...Derozian journals."<sup>1</sup>

It was precisely to meet this "wide gap in our knowledge of Young Bengal", that the writer of this introduction terreted out from near-oblivion, the 3 volume *Proceedings* of the Derozian Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (SAGK), which thrived in Calcutta from 1838 to 1843, and edited a volume of source-materials for the study of Young Bengal's ideas and activities. This was over a decade ago.<sup>2</sup>

1. Sarkar, Sumit: "The Complexities of Young Bengal", *Nineteenth Century Studies*, Calcutta, October 1973.
2. Chattopadhyay, Gautam (Ed): *Awakening in Bengal in Early Nineteenth Century*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1965.

Similar important source-materials have been unearthed in the past few years by this writer and are now being presented before all scholars, in the shape of the present volume. These include selections (from the original) from the monthly journal *KALEIDOSCOPE*, edited by Derozio himself in 1829 and 1830 ; verbatim report (in part) of a meeting organized by the Derozians and others early in 1835 in Calcutta, to criticise the Charter Act of 1833 ; full text of the speech of the Derozian Saradaprosad Ghosh, during the foundation of an embryonic nationalist organization, *Deshahitaishunee Subha* in 1841 ; the full proceedings leading to the formation of the *Bengal British India Society*, (1843), in a sense, the first political organisation in Bengal in the Nineteenth Century and a bunch of articles on women's emancipation from the files of the rare journal *REFORMER* (1833). Together, they give us a much more detailed insight into the minds of Derozio, the Derozians and other young liberals of the period, than has hitherto been available to scholars.

## II

H.L.V. Derozio started teaching in the Hindoo College in 1826, at the very young age of 17. Many of the students of the higher classes, were also in their early teens and he soon literally became their friend, philosopher and guide. In 1827-28, under his patronage and often in his house, regular debates and discussions took place and an organisation was born—perhaps our first youth association—the Academic Association. Eloquent tributes have been paid to Derozio and the Derozians, by later-day Bengalee liberals in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. Referring to the sittings of the Academic Association, Reverend Lal Behari Dey wrote that it was here that “the choice spirits of young Calcutta held forth, week after week, on the social, moral and religious questions of the day. The general tone of the discussions was a decided revolt against existing religious institutions.”<sup>3</sup>

3. Dey, Lal Behari : *Recollections of Alexander Duff*, London, 1879.



In 1829-30, Derozio and his pupils brought out a number of journals to freely express their views. The young students of Hindoo College, brought out a journal called *Parthenon*. The first issue contained articles advocating the cause of education for women and denouncing idolatory and superstition among Hindoos. This roused the wrath of the orthodoxy and *Parthenon* was suppressed, even before the second number could see the light of day. Commenting on this episode, the organ of Young Bengal wrote a decade later : "It (*Parthenon*) startled the orthodox Hindoos and their might and influence crushed it in the bud. The second number was in type, although it was never circulated. But the spirit of enquiry was not—could not be checked. The good old men took fright and the sound of alarm was trumpeted forth by *Chandrika*—the organ of the orthodox. Boys were removed by their dozens from the Hindoo College."<sup>4</sup>

Despite diligent search by many research scholars, not a single copy of *Parthenon* has been discovered so far. However, now, we have unearthed the full set of *Kaleidoscope*, the monthly edited by Derozio himself in 1829-30. A careful scrutiny of its articles, give us a more accurate idea of the mind of Derozio in this crucial period. The first issue was brought out in August 1829 and contained the famous poem by Derozio, which he read to successive chain of his pupils (To My Pupils) and which was composed in the Hindoo College itself, in July 1829. The closing lines of the poem gives a clear picture of Derozio's attitude towards the students, when he writes :

"...how you worship Truth's omnipotence !  
 What gladness rains upon me, when I see  
 Fame, in the mirror of Futurity,  
 Weaving the chaplets you are doomed to gain —  
 And then I feel I have not lived in vain"<sup>5</sup>

The second issue of the monthly contain an extremely

4. *Bengal Spectator*, September 1842.

5. *Kaleidoscope*, No. I, August 1829.

interesting article : *On the Colonization of India by Europeans*. It is unsigned and therefore it is quite likely that it was written by the editor himself. The article opens with two leading questions : Will colonization endanger British rule ? Will it be beneficial or otherwise to the natives in general ? Then it goes on to state : "The most superficial observer must perceive that India is maintained in subjection only by *Military Force*. Withdraw it, and the boasted opinion of the natives, instead of supporting, would immediately prove the cause of the utter subversion of the empire. We have lately read in one of the papers that at Lucknow, during the late Mohurrum, prayers were publicly said, for the destruction of the Company's government ! Now it is evident that if a large number of Europeans be allowed to settle in the country, they would form a counterpoise, in some degree, to the hostile dispositions of the native subjects."<sup>6</sup>

However, the writer has an equally strong argument against European colonization in India. He writes : "My own inquiries convince me that the conduct of Europeans to their indigenous fellow subjects would tend to alienate them, and ultimately lead to serious consequences. I entertain strong doubts whether Europeans can settle in the country without gradually dispossessing the natives of their lands and causing there by incalculable misery and dissatisfaction."<sup>7</sup>

The final conclusion of the writer seems to be against European colonization, for he pleads for alteration of "the present system of Indian policy, by admitting natives and Indo Britons to a participation of privileges, on a similar footing, as far as practicable and expedient, with the Europeans. It is only by such a measure, that discontent can be prevented from brooding into rebellion."<sup>8</sup>

This article has been quoted at length, because a careful scrutiny of all the issues of *Kaleidoscope*, reveal that this is

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6. *ibid.* No. 2, September 1829.

7. *ibid.*

8. *ibid.*

the basic trend of the attitude of Derozio and his supporters — ceaseless appeal for *liberalization* of British rule in India, *not its replacement* by some form of self-government.

There are other articles, which do not even have this thick coating of liberalism—where the imperialist scribe speaks in a more arrogant manner. Here is one such example (*Sketches of the Present State of India, No. 1*) :

"The English began by force of arms to endeavour to convince them, ( people of Hindoosthan ) that it was militating against the law of nations to attempt to exclude them from participating in a lucrative trade in common with others. This led to a series of events terminating finally in the firm establishment of such a government as India long required."<sup>9</sup>

The writer is also happy that the colonial government is imparting education and enacting various reform measures in such a way that "not a remnant of ancient habits, moral or political can ultimately exist."<sup>10</sup> This is no admiration of a crusade against orthodoxy, but support for a policy that would try to alienate educated Indians from their grass roots, their traditions and heritage. And such a viewpoint is printed in Derozio's journal !

This article, moreover, is no exceptional one. The journal regularly published a series each month called : *The East India Company's Charter*. In the second instalment of this article, the writer observes : "The just and equitable administration of justice, the security of person and property and the enjoyment of other equally estimable immunities, must reconcile the inhabitants ( of India ) to the overthrow of their own power and the establishment of British influence."<sup>11</sup> The writer is harshly critical of those Indians, who may have shown elementary patriotic sense in this period and made sharp criticisms of British rule in India : "It must be a remarkable perversity that can induce a man to disregard all the

9. *Kaleidoscope*, No. 2, September 1829.

10. *ibid*.

11. *Kaleidoscope*, No. 3, October 1829.

good that is produced and rake out casual and unpremeditated injuries, which may have been unintentionally committed, on purpose to set them up as a perpetual theme to create distrust and dissatisfaction."<sup>12</sup>

The journal aims most of its arguments at the Western educated community of Bengal—men coming from wealthy classes of zemindars, traders and other professions and whose young men were intoxicated with the glamour and glitter of European civilization. In another unsigned leading article (possibly written by Derozio himself, if not, certainly written with his editorial approval), called *Cursory Remarks on the British Government in India*, patriotic feeling of Indians have been sharply criticised : "The British will ever be considered by the natives in the light of intruders and this feeling will naturally regulate their opinion on this subject. The well informed amongst the natives will be most reluctant to give a preference to the existing rule, over that which formerly swayed the natives of India, because such an opinion would at once imply their great inferiority to their present rulers, and their incapacity to govern their affairs."<sup>13</sup>

The attitude of the journal towards the vast toiling masses of India, is, however interesting. The same article observes : "Inquire again amongst the poorer classes, and the result will be, that the general feeling is against their rulers. But of what weight is such an opinion ?"<sup>14</sup>

Since everyone can go through the entire reprint of *Kaleidoscope* made available in the opening section of the present volume, it is not necessary to quote any more or at length from various articles printed in that journal. But the excerpts already given and the full material available inside, makes it clear that the portrayal of Derozio as an Indian patriot or even as one who planted the seeds of patriotism in the minds of his pupils, is, to put it mildly, a highly coloured

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12. *ibid.*

13. *Kaleidoscope*, Vol. II, No. VIII, March 1830.

14. *ibid.*



picture and do not really conform to reality. This, however, does not detract from his credit of having made a whole chain in young Bengalee pupils critical and full of the spirit of enquiry. Derozio edited *Kaleidoscope* in 1829 and 1830—two peak years of his role as the mentor of Young Bengal. Therefore, what he wrote in this journal and what was the general tone and tenor of the journal under his stewardship, make instructive study, for a proper assessment of Derozio.

### III

Pupils of Derozio, no doubt were his fervent admirers, but they were a mixed bunch and quite a few of them did not share many of the views expressed in the articles and editorials of *Kaleidoscope*, which their *guru* edited.

For example, we come across the notice of a meeting, convened in Calcutta, on 5 January 1835 in the Town Hall, with the object of sending a mass petition to the British Parliament, for repeal of the odious Press Regulation of 1824 and also for the removal of restraints upon public meetings. The meeting also aimed to voice its criticism against the Charter Act of 1833. Among the signatories, who came forward to convene the meeting, we find the names of leading liberals of Calcutta like Dwarkanauth Tagore, Hurro Chandra Bose, Radha Prasad Roy, Prosunno Coomer Tagore as well as Derozians like Russick Krishna Mullick.<sup>15</sup>

In the meeting, Russick Krishna Mullick, one of the favourite pupils of Derozio and editor of the bi-lingual journal *Jnananvesan*, delivered quite a militant speech. Criticising the Charter Act of 1833, Mullick opened his speech with the observation that "It was passed not for the benefit of India, but for the benefit of the proprietors of Indian stock and the benefit of the people of England, while the welfare of the

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15. *Bengal Hurkaru*, special supplement containing verbatim report of the meeting, 6 January 1835, available in pamphlet form in the Carey Memorial Library, Serampore College, Serampore, West Bengal.

millions who inhabit these vast regions were not at all cared for (cheers)."<sup>16</sup>

Referring to the favours bestowed by the Act on Christian Missions, Mullick sharply queried : "Why should the revenue of this country taken from the hard earnings of the poor of India, wretchedly fed and clothed, be devoted to the purpose of extending a religion, which the natives feel to be destructive both of their temporal and eternal happiness ?"<sup>17</sup>

Raising the political slogan of Indianization of the services, Russick criticised the European civilians for having no contacts with the Indian people and pleaded for the rights of Indians to enter civil services. In a bantering tone, Mullick points out that "Two additional bishops have been provided for the comfort of the civil and military servants but there is no provision whatever for the education of the people of India ( loud cheers ). What are the conclusions at which we must arrive from this state of things ?"<sup>18</sup>

Another pupil of Hindoo College, Kylash Chunder Dutta, wrote a prize-winning essay about India of his dreams a hundred years hence and in that essay he imagined that Bengalees have risen in armed rebellion for the overthrowal of British rule in India.<sup>19</sup> The rebellion was ultimately crushed, but the patriotic leader of the rebellion, a Bengalee youth, faced death with remarkable courage. In his imaginary speech before he was executed, the rebel leader told the assembled people : "I have shed my last blood in defence of my country and though the feeble spark within me is about to leave the frail frame, I hope you will continue to persevere in the course you have so gloriously commenced."<sup>20</sup>

By 1838, the young liberals of Bengal, had gone forward another major step and formed their own organization - The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge. Almost

16. *ibid.*

17. *ibid.*

18. *ibid.*

19. Dutt, Kylash Chunder : "A Journal of 48 Hours of the year 1945", *Calcutta Literary Gazette*, 6 June 1835.

20. *Ibid.*

all men who were leading figures in our social and political awakening in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, were in their teens when they formed the SAGK in 1838. The *Proceedings* contain various interesting contributions, advocating reform and regeneration of this country, but reference to them in detail is being avoided here, as the entire *Proceedings* of the SAGK (1838-43) is available in a companion volume, edited by the writer of this note, more than a decade ago.<sup>21</sup>

By the early forties, embryonic nationalist consciousness had started dawning on the minds of the liberal intelligentsia of Bengal, notably among the Young Bengal. A clear proof of this became available in 1841, when over 200 enthusiastic young men and some elders, most of them belonging to Young Bengal, met in North Calcutta to form a patriotic organization called the *Deshahitaishunee Subha* or the society for the well-being of the country. This was frankly a political organization, and the speeches make this point clear.<sup>22</sup>

The rules adopted for the new society make interesting reading. The organizers stipulated that the new society was to be open to *all* natives of India, irrespective of religion, caste or creed.<sup>23</sup> This was quite remarkable for the period.

The main speech on the occasion (full text has been included in the present volume) was delivered by Saradaprosad Ghosh, headmaster of a local school, a man who was, in the past, a student of the Hindoo College and a favourite pupil of Derozio. In a remarkable speech, Saradaprosad observed : "Ever since the commencement of British supremacy in this country, the policy of our present rulers have been to deprive us of the enjoyment of political liberty. This is a fact well-known to everyone who views their administration in its effects upon our condition ..... our deprivation of

21. Chattopadhyay, Gautam (Ed) : *Awakening in Bengal in Early Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1. Calcutta, 1965.

22. *Bengal Hurkaru*, 6 October 1841. Reprinted in *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, November 1841.

23. *ibid.*

the enjoyment of political liberty is the cause of our misery and degradation ... I have, accordingly, taken the liberty of submitting to your liberal considerations, what in my humble opinion appear to be the most feasible means of effecting a change in our degraded condition ..... First, Have union among yourselves ..... Secondly, Love your country..... Patriotism is absolutely necessary to give effect to union, and to direct it to the proper channel of national usefulness."<sup>24</sup>

There are implicit indications in the speech, that the speaker well understands that the qualitative improvement of the condition of the Indians can be achieved, only by throwing off the British yoke, but the speaker also believes that such a time has not yet matured, so far as patriotic Indians are concerned. In very clear accents, Ghosh tells his countrymen : "You do not, like the brave and noble-minded American, aspire as high as to free yourselves from the yoke of the British sway, to take in your own hands the reins of government and to display in the world, striking instances of your courage exerted in the cause of your independence. No, your aspiration is by far much humble ; you only desire that you may be freed from the tyranny and oppression of the local government of this country."<sup>25</sup>

This, in fact, was the most forward-looking stance taken by supporters of Young Bengal : not independence no doubt, but-good, liberal government under the British, government that would ensure not only the well-being of the people, but give educated Indians the right to participate in the work of the administration, consistent with their growing sense of national self-respect.

#### IV

*Deshahitaishunee Subha* was the embryo, so also was the SAGK. By 1842-43, these early nationalists, if we may be permitted so to characterise them, went further ahead and decided to form a full-fledged political organization. The first resolution passed unanimously in the formation meeting of the *Deshahitaishunee Subha* was that the Subha would unite

24. *ibid.*

25. *ibid.*



and cooperate with the British India Society in England for the attainment of its objects.<sup>26</sup> Dwarkanauth Tagore, friend of Rammohan and himself a liberal went to England in 1841. The British India Society and similar other radical organisations of England, like one in Edinburgh gave him warm and cordial reception (one such reception-address at Edinburgh in 1842, has been included in this volume). Dwarkanauth established contacts with George Thompson, the leader of anti-slavery agitation and invited him to come to India on behalf of the organisers of the SAGK and the *Deshahitaishunee Subha*.

George Thompson arrived in India late in 1842 and early in 1843, he met the members and friends of the Society for Acquisition of General Knowledge (SAGK) a number of times, to discuss the ways and means for the formation of a political association in Bengal. The first meeting took place at the Hindoo College on 11 January 1843, where Tarachand Chakravarty presided.<sup>27</sup> The second meeting took place on 30 January 1843, at the house of Chandra Sekhar Dev and 32 persons were present.<sup>28</sup> The third meeting took place on 6 February, 1843, at the house of Sri Kissen Sing of Manik-tolla and 200 members of SAGK were present.<sup>29</sup> The fourth and fifth meetings were also held at the same place on 20 February 1843 and 27 February 1843, respectively.<sup>30</sup> The sixth meeting was held on 6 March 1843, at 31, Fouzdari Balakhana, where over 300 persons were present.<sup>31</sup> The seventh meeting was held at the same place on 13 March, 1843.<sup>32</sup> In all these meetings it was not only George Thompson who pleaded the case for the formation of a full-fledged political association in Bengal, but many others like Tarachand Chakravarty, Kishori Chand Mitra, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Chandra Sekhar Deb, Shama Charan Sen, Ramgopal Ghosh and so on. As the full-text of all their speeches, as published in the columns of *Bengal Spectator* have been

26. *ibid.* 27. *Bengal Spectator*, 1 March 1843.

28. *ibid.* 29. *ibid.* 30. *ibid.* 16 March 1843.

31. *ibid.* 32. *ibid.* 24 March 1843.

included in this volume, it is not necessary to quote from them here.

Finally, at a public meeting held at 31, Fouzdari Balakhana, Calcutta, on 30 April 1843, by the SAGK and where several hundred citizens were present, a resolution was unanimously passed to the effect that "A Society be now formed and denominated, the *Bengal British India Society*, the object of which shall be, the collection and dissemination of information, relating to the actual condition of the people of British India and the Laws, Institutions and Resources of the countries and to employ such other means, of a peaceful and lawful character, as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects."<sup>33</sup>

The first meeting of the newly formed Bengal British India Society was held at 31, Fouzdari Balakhana, on Thursday, 11 May 1843. In this meeting 20 point rules and bye-laws were unanimously adopted.<sup>34</sup> Rule No. 7 stipulated that "the Society shall, through its committee, prepare and present to Government, representations, memorials and petitions for the redress of grievances and the introduction of measures of reform."<sup>35</sup> Other rules stipulated that all committee members and office-bearers shall be annually elected and the interesting point to note was that, such elections would be by secret ballot voting.<sup>36</sup> This meeting also elected the first office-bearers, with George Thompson as the Chairman, Peary Chand Mitra as the Secretary and Ramgopal Ghosh as the Treasurer.<sup>37</sup>

In July 1843, the Bengal British India Society, printed a questionnaire in the pages of the *Bengal Spectator* (full text included in this volume), asking all members and supporters of the Society to collect data about the land and land-tenure situation, condition of ryots, under tenants and so on.<sup>38</sup> It

33. *Bengal Spectator*, 25 April 1843.

34. *ibid.* 17 May 1843.

35. *ibid.*

36. *ibid.*

37. *ibid.*

38. *Bengal Spectator*, Volume II, July 1843.

is a remarkable document for the period and gives a clear proof, that there was certainly a trend among Young Bengal, who felt deeply for the mass of our poor peasantry and tried to collect facts for focussing their grievances before the educated public.

There are many more interesting news and articles in the pages of *Bengal Spectator*, but space does not permit including much of that material in this volume. However, the full report of the case against Radhanauth Sikder, a Derozian, champion of women's rights and of the toiling masses, has been included in this volume. Radhanauth worked in the Survey of India, where the European officers often misbehaved with the Indian porters, particularly the poor hillmen. On one such occasion Radhanauth stood up for the porters, condemned the beating up of hillmen by an English officer and actually thrashed him. As a result a case was instituted against Radhanauth and naturally he lost the case and was fined. But in the eyes of Young Bengal he emerged as a sort of hero, for having stood up for our toiling poor against the racist European officers.<sup>39</sup>

This reveals, in embryo, a new tone and temper of Young Bengal, more militantly nationalistic than the thirties. Referring perhaps to the Radhanauth Sikder episode and this new tone and temper, a member of the new society, wrote a decade later :

"The day is now gone by when a Hindu could be struck even by an Englishman with impunity. We have ourselves more than once seen the blow instantly returned..... Societies and Associations have been formed, in which indignant members have spoken menace and defiance while alluding to the British name and portrayed in lurid colours, the treachery, perfidy and aggression, oppression, extortion and injustice of the British power."<sup>40</sup>

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39. *Bengal Spectator*, Volume II, July to September 1843.

40. Dutt, Soshee Chunder : *Essay on Miscellaneous Subjects*, Calcutta, 1854.

Chronologically, the *Reformer* comes much earlier (1831-33) and has been put in the second section of the volume, but because the liberal sponsors of *Reformer* represent a trend somewhat different from that of the Derozians, it is being dealt with last. Prosunno Coomer Tagore, who brought out the *Reformer* as a weekly on 5 February 1831, was a supporter of the liberal views of Rammohan Roy and from 1830 he became a Trustee of the Brahmo Samaj. In the second number of *Reformer*, Prosunno Coomer spelt out the aims of the weekly :

"We have commenced probing, and will probe on, till we discover that which will make us feel we are men in common with others, and like them, capable of being good, great and noble. We have been sufficiently degraded and despised and will no longer bear the stigma...Let us follow the ensign of liberty and truth."<sup>41</sup>

The articles published in *Reformer*, usually were in the form of letters to the Editor and at the end of many of these letters, were editorial comments. This made the weekly all the more interesting. The weekly was a champion of social reforms and women's emancipation was a favourite theme of the columnists and the editor. Commenting on H.D. Sircar's letter on female education, and criticising the prevailing degraded social conditions, the editor writes : "Now what is to be the remedy of all these evils ? Evidently female education. When education penetrates into their apartments, we may look for the radical reform of a thousand evils which now resist the utmost efforts of the school master that is abroad. The physical and moral education of a people must in a great measure depend on the education of the women on whom these important changes necessarily depend."<sup>42</sup>

There are also slashing attacks on polygamy as practised by so-called upper caste Hindu orthodoxy. In one such letter,

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41. *Reformer*, 12 February 1831.

42. *Reformer*, 4 August 1833.

the writer observes : "They who sympathise with woman as the inseparable partner of man's joy and fears, they who have marked the tears of weeping beauty and known how miserable it is not to be able to dash it away, will join with me in praying that the sorrows of India's daughters be calmed for ever. As for you, Mr. Editor, I have ever observed with pleasure your calls to your countrymen for the removal of this barbarous and detestable custom."<sup>43</sup>

Miserable condition of young widows also attracted the notice of *Reformer*. In one of the many moving letters, a columnist queries : "Is or is not the general tendency of the exclusion of widows from second marriage to produce in the first instance misery—cruel misery and in the second, vice and prostitution of the lowest kinds : The conclusion must be admitted that the evil and malignant influence of such a custom must be felt deeply in society."<sup>44</sup> It is well to remember that this letter and similar other articles were written in *Reformer* and some of the journals brought out by the Derozians, full two decades before the great Vidyasagar launched his famous crusade for widow re-marriage.

Space has not permitted us to add more articles from *Reformer*, articles on future Government of India, in favour of freedom of press, for Indianisation of services and so on. Nonetheless, a careful perusal of *Reformer*, together with the journals edited by members of Young Bengal reveal that while the former gave much greater emphasis on social, religious and educational reforms, the latter, gave far greater stress on political issues and political rights of Indians.

## VI

What then are our final conclusions, after a study and analysis of *Kaleidoscope*, *Reformer*, *Bengal Spectator* etc. (whose careful selections make up the present volume) as well as the *Proceedings* of the SAGK (1838-43) ? It is a

43. *Reformer*, 15 April 1833.

44. *Reformer*, 6 October 1833.

gross exaggeration to glorify Derozio as a rebel and an ardent patriot, but there is no doubt that he made his pupils critical about their environment and society, planted in their minds a spirit of enquiry, which quite a few of them carried forward in the thirties and early forties of the Nineteenth Century. The class basis of the Young Bengal and the colonial surroundings stilted their growth ; few of them showed any inclination for industrial adventures. Still fewer, had real sympathy and understanding for the masses of Bengal's peasantry, though the existence of even such a trend is clear from the evidence supplied in this volume, but even then, at best, it was a rather weak trend.

Moreover, all these reformers suffered from a serious illusion that British Parliament, once they knew the grim realities of India, would respond to their grievances. At the same time, however these young men fearlessly criticised the acts of oppression and extortion carried out by the local government in India and tried to inculcate a sense of national dignity and self-respect among the Indians. In the thirties and early forties of the Nineteenth Century, this was no mean achievement, and surely laid the basis for nationalist awakening in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. One can only hope, that this volume, with its valuable rare source-materials, will further help all scholars and students of history of this period to come to better grips with the complexities of Young Bengal.

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20 April 1978



SELECTIONS FROM  
THE KALEIDOSCOPE

*THE KALEIDOSCOPE* was a monthly journal started by H. L. V. Derozio in August, 1829 and it lasted till July, 1830. These selections are made from the complete original file. Derozio and his admirers launched a number of short lived journals like *PARTHENON*; *ENQUIRER*; *JNANANVESAN* and *KALEIDOSCOPE*. None of these journals have so far been seen in the original, this being the first such effort to present selections from one of them.

## ADDRESS

### Prefatory, Explanatory, Expostulatory, and Dedicatory

#### I.

A CUSTOM 'tis at each important meeting  
    (Be it about diplomacy or not)  
To greet with plaguy ceremonious greeting ;  
    And so by us it shall not be forgot :—  
Therefore we're bowing, scraping, and retreating,  
    Looking quite *non-plused*, and we know not what --  
Fearing, most mighty PUBLIC I how to meet you,  
And almost hardly knowing how to greet you.

#### II.

But salutations now are quite the way  
    Of those who stand to meet the public eye,  
And offer up themselves as willing prey  
    To every ill-willed fiend's malignity ;  
So that we too must even say our say,  
    And to get creditably off we'll try ;  
'Tis all we can : but if the gods don't bless,  
"Tis not in mortals to command success.'

#### III.

It came into our heads (the heads of two—  
    And two heads surely better are than one)  
That in Calcutta monthly feasts would do  
    Of solid dishes garnished well with fun :

~And this, the first that's offered up to you,  
     We hope will gain the heartiest 'well done'  
 Even from the growlers and the sulkiest grunTERS,  
 For your obedient intellectual GunTERS.

## IV.

Now that we've laid the cloth upon the table,  
     Pray turn not up, Sir, your patrician nose,  
 And do not by your frowns make that unstable  
     Which we, your servants humbly would propose :  
 To make it firm we think we shall be able,  
     If not—why then away at once it goes.  
 Upon this feast some *talents* have been spent,  
 Perhaps in vain, but certainly well meant.

## V.

Good reader I know you what it is to be  
     Puzzled, perplexed, and flabbergasted quite ?  
 If not, we'll tell you in this place—for we  
     Are somewhat in that state, — being posed outright,  
 Scarce knowing how to introduce to thee  
     And to thy favour (which must be the light  
 Wherein 'twill live or die) this little book,  
 Or even to ask you 'in its depths to look.'

[ No. 1 ; August, 1829 ]

## SONNET

### To My Pupils

Expanding, like the petals of young flowers,  
I watch the opening of your infant minds,  
And the sweet loosening of the spell that binds  
Your intellectual energies and powers,  
That stretch, like young birds in soft summer hours,  
Their wings to try their strength. O ! how the winds  
Of circumstance, and gentle April showers  
Of early knowledge, and unnumbered kinds  
Of new perceptions shed their influence ;  
And how you worship Truth's omnipotence !  
What gladness rains upon me, when I see  
Fame, in the mirror of Futurity,  
Weaving the chaplets you are doomed to gain —  
And then I feel I have not lived in vain.

D.

H. C.  
July, 1829.

[No. 1 ; August, 1829.]

## EAST INDIANS IN THE MOFUSSIL

### The Laws which Affect East Indians in the Mofussil

No. 1\*

NOTHING is less known to East Indians than the laws under which they live in the *mofussil*. Important as this knowledge must be allowed to be, East Indians have had no opportunity of acquiring it. Placed under peculiar circumstances, and circumscribed in their intercourse, they have lived, much to their comfort, aloof from the law and its turmoils. If individuals, in different parts of the country, have come in collision with the laws, none but themselves have profited by their experience. A great deal of misinformation, rather, a great lack of information, is the consequence. They know not the relations in which they stand, or the point of view in which they are beheld by the dispensers of the law; and there is no means of obtaining information, and none are disposed to communicate any light to them. An inquiry into the matter, and a consideration of the statements which have been put forth regarding it, become, therefore, very desirable.

We hesitate at what point to commence such an inquiry as because we do not know on what subject, more than on another, information is requisite. And had we no other guide than our own choice, we should be disposed to enter upon an examination of the whole *corpus juris*, and comment on every particular it embraces. But we are hapily releived from this necessity. Something like a declaration of the law is before us in the East Indians' Petition—a document which is, we believe, very generally known, and the statements of which are likely to be generally received. The present discussion, we must confess, is greatly owing to that paper; but it has not originated from any opposition to the petition itself; and it is far from our aim to frustrate or hinder its objects. Liberty to complain of grievances must at once be con-

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\* Other instalments of the article were not published. (Ed.)



ceded to those who labour under them ; and it is an exquisite tyranny to torture a man, and then abuse him for groaning. We are satisfied, too, that the motives in general by which the promoters of the petition have been influenced, are such as to do them credit. It is their desire to obtain for their countrymen that station in society, and those immunities, which they conceive them to deserve ; and we think their efforts should be duly appreciated by those whose benefit is contemplated.

While, therefore, we allow the expediency of complaining when grievances are felt, and award the need of praise to those who have been actually engaged in promoting the petition, we are not disposed to concur in the gratuitous statements and perverted expositions of the law which it contains. The remarks we may hazard, it is not unlikely, may be misconstrued. Our attempt to expose and correct the misstatements of the petition regarding the *mofussil* laws, may be construed into hostility against its promoters, and the objects they have in view ; and the merit of those persons may be represented to be so great as to make amends for all the errors and imperfections of the document. We know 'what cold requitals others have found in their several redemptions of truth' from the favourers of the petition, in the discussions which have been published in that independent paper—the Calcutta Gazette. But we shall not be deterred by such considerations from commenting on the allegations of the petition with that freedom which is requisite in such discussions. We hope it will be apparant, from the tenor of our remarks, that our object is the pursuit of truth, and not the indulgence of spleen against persons and parties.

The first inquiry is, Are all East Indians subject to the laws of the Company in the interior ? Not the whole body of East Indians ; though the exception is confined to an exceedingly small portion. The descendants of Europeans, by native mothers, as well as the offspring of such individuals, are included in the description of persons subject to the jurisdiction of the *zillah* and city courts. Those who are born of

European parents are the small number who are exempted. —An early regulation of Government (Reg. iii. of 1793) defines who are subject to the *refussil* courts. 'All natives, and other persons not British subjects, are amenable to the jurisdiction of the *zillah* and city courts.' A subsequent enactment, (Reg. viii. 1813) to remove the doubts which had arisen relative to the expression 'native subjects of the British Government,' declares that it shall be considered applicable to 'natural\* born subjects of the British Government'. From these enactments it must be evident, that all persons born within the dominions of the British Government in India, are considered its natural born subjects, and accordingly amenable to the laws which it promulgates. Under these circumstances, the direct inference is, that the whole body of East Indians is included under the denomination of 'natural born subjects of the British Government,' since they owe allegiance to that Government, by the circumstance of being born within its dominions. But an exception is made by the highest judicial authority of the Company, the *Sudder Dewanny Adawlut*, in favour of those individuals who are of European parentage of both sides, who are directed to be considered as Europeans, the place of their birth being immaterial.

An idea prevails in some quarters that those East Indians who are of legitimate birth may claim the rights of British subjects; and that such claim will be allowed by the judicial authorities in the interior. We have not, however, been able to find any thing like a recognition of this doctrine. If such a claim has, in any instance, been granted, it was, we will venture to say, in consequence of some misapprehension of the general regulations. It is of no use to allege here the opinions of the judges and barristers of the Supreme Court, unless the Company's servants be authorised to receive from

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\* We hope that this term will not be supposed to imply any thing but the opposite of *alien*,

that court the interpretation of the Company's laws. If the Supreme Court will admit the legitimate sons of Europeans by native mothers to the privileges of British subjects, equally with the class who are so favoured by the Government, they can, if they deem it necessary, avail themselves of this concession. If they are afraid to commit their cause into the hands of the local authorities, they cannot put in their claim to be sent down to Calcutta, for the purpose of being tried by the Supreme Court ; for a claim of this kind will not be admitted. It is only in the event of their being thrown into the prison of a *mofussil* court, that they can appeal to the Supreme Court. So that the privilege granted by the latter court will be as if they had none, except in cases of singular emergency which, it is probable, will never occur to the greatest part of this division of East Indians.

We proceed to the next inquiry. What is the nature of the laws to which East Indians are in general subject in the interior ? This question admits of a 'wide solution'.

The Company's regulations recognize only two classes of subjects—Hindoos, and Mahomedans ; a distinction which refers to their religious, rather than their political character, their religion being involved in their laws. Other classes come under notice, but only occasionally ; and since there are no distinct enactments for them, it must be doubtful by what rule they are to be guided in their conduct. The East Indians participate in these inconveniences with the other classes ; but they have nothing peculiar to complain of. Every evil they have to suffer must likewise be felt by the classes to which they allude. *Ferrequam sortem patiuntur omnes, nemo recusat.* It is, however, deserving of consideration, how the conduct and transactions of these classes of persons are viewed by the local authorities. How are they permitted to bequeath their property ? What makes their marriages lawful ? Questions like these, it is impossible not to be able to answer. The laws which have prevailed among these classes, for whom the Government have made no specific enactments, are the rules by which the judges are guided in their decisions. If it be said,

that these customs are of too uncertain a nature to be binding on a community, or received in the courts as rules for deciding matters before them, the answer is easy: such *is* the case ; and we are acquainted with no instance of a decision contrary to these customs, or of the Hindoo or Mahomedan law being ever forced on parties professing a different religion, as the rule of their conduct. Such is the case in the very matters on which the petition so tautologically expatiates, with those who live under the laws of England. These common acts are not the subjects of express legislation ; they are sanctioned by the *common law* only, which has received the force of law solely from long and immemorial usage. 'This, (says Blackstone,) for the most part, settles the course in which lands descend by inheritance; the manner and form of acquiring and transferring property ; the solemnities and obligation of contracts ; the rules of expounding wills, deeds, and acts of parliament ; the respective remedies of civil injuries ; the several species of temporal offences, with the manner and degree of punishment ; and an infinite number of minuter particulars, which diffuse themselves as extensively as the ordinary distribution of common justice requires. Thus, for example, that there shall be four superior courts of record, the chancery, the king's bench, the common pleas, and the exchequer; that the eldest son alone is heir to his ancestor ; that property may be acquired and transferred by writing ; that a deed is of no validity unless sealed and delivered ; that wills shall be construed more favourably, and deeds more strictly; that money lent upon bond is recoverable by action of debt; that breaking the public peace is an offence, and punishable by fine and imprisonment ; —all these are doctrines that are not set down in any written statute or ordinance, but depend merely upon immemorial usage, that is upon common law, for their support.' Such is the state of East Indians with regard to law in civil matters

In criminal matters, the Mahomedan law is avowedly the *basis* of the criminal jurisprudence of the *mofussil* courts. The Mahomedan law consists of the precepts of Mahomed, both



written and traditional, with the sentences of commentators, either explaining the old rules, or reducing new ones for cases not before provided for. The Mahomedan law, as a whole, is various ; and suited for an imperfect state of society. These are defects ; but the Company's regulations have provided for them. The regulations declare which of the commentators shall be quoted and appealed to for points of law in the *futwas* of the law officers of courts ; and they contain several provisions by which the imperfections of the Mahomedan law are remedied, and it is made more consonant to our ideas of natural justice. They are not intended to mitigate the severities of the Mahomedan law ; for severities it has none. For, instead of being cruel and oppressive, as the petition asserts, it is, in the opinion of Warren Hastings, founded on an abhorrence of bloodshed. Accordingly, the British Government have found it necessary to specify penalties for certain criminal acts which, under the Mahomedan law, escaped just punishment. The Mahomedan law is but an extension of the *lex talionis*. It knows no other end of justice than the satisfaction of the injured party or his heirs ; and its punishments are all commutative. Under a law so constituted, it is easy to perceive how frequently the criminal must pass unhurt. If he is a powerful man, who will venture to provoke his further vengeance by seeking retaliation ? And in several other respects, offenders are likely never to receive the punishment due to their crimes. Now the British Government step forward to take the execution of the law in their own hands ; to provide penalties for every description of crime ; and arm the hands of justice with the powers which she ought to exercise. But they have not been merely anxious to prevent the escape of criminals, through the imperfect standard of justice adopted in the Mahomedan law ; they have also endeavoured to prevent the infliction of severe punishment on individuals who did not merit it, according to natural justice. Thus they have enacted ( Reg. iv. 1797 ) : 'If in any case not provided for by the regulations, the Mahomedan law appear to the court repugnant to justice, they are notwithstanding to adhere thereto,



if in favour of the prisoner, in the case before them ; or if against the prisoner, to recommend a pardon or mitigation of the punishment to the Governor General in Council, and at the same time to propose a new regulation to provide against a recurrence of the case, in the form prescribed by Reg. XX. 1793.' Another enactment ( Reg. ix. 1793 ) is intended to remedy the partiality, in some cases, of the Mahomedan law towards the faithful ; and to place all classes of subjects on the same footing. 'The religious persuasions of witnesses shall not be considered as a bar to the conviction or condemnation of a prisoner ; but in cases in which the evidence given on a trial would be deemed incompetent by the Mahomedan law, solely on the ground of the persons giving such evidence not professing the Mahomedan religion, the law officers of the courts of circuit are to be required to declare what would have been thier *futwa* supposing such witnesses had been Mahomedans. The courts of circuit are not to pass sentence on such cases, but shall transmit the record of the trial, with the *futwa* directed to be required from the law officers, to the Nijamat Adawlut, which court, provided they approve of the proceedings held on the trial, shall pass such sentence as they would have passed had the witnesses, whose testimony may be so deemed incompetent, been of the Mahomedan persuasion.'

The petition very erroneously states respecting the Mahomedan law, that 'it is arbitrarily administered'. It is not left to the judge to impose what penalty he please for any crime ; but every offence has its specific penalty. In most cases the measure of penalty is given in detail ; in some only, which we shall presently notice, it is left to the discretion of the judge. By the regulations the law officer is not only called upon to give his opinion, whether the prisoner is convicted of the crime charged against him, according to the Mahomedan law, but he is required to state the punishment which that law adjudges. The words of Reg. IV. 1793, with respect to one instance, are : 'the law officer is to declare the *prescribed* penalty for the same, according to the Mahomedan law'. The regulations leave to the discretion of the provincial judges

the punishment of such crimes only (not of a heinous nature) as are neither 'especially provided for by any regulations, nor by any stated penalty in the Mahomedan law.' Is less done under the laws of England? The petition proceeds to state: 'though a right of appeal is in many cases allowed to the superior court of criminal jurisdiction of the East India Company, called the Nizamut Adawlut, yet that tribunal possesses the extraordinary power, on such appeal, of increasing the punishment; which is awarded at their discretion, and without hearing fresh evidence.' Who would not suppose, from this language, that when an appeal is made to the Nizamut Adawlut from the erroneous judgment or excessive punishment of an inferior tribunal, that court is at liberty to check the presumptuous spirit which prompted the appeal by inflicting heavier punishment than was already adjudged? But how different is the intent of the regulation? Being empowered to award only a certain extent of punishment, the courts of circuit are authorized, by the provisions of Reg. liii. of 1803, to refer to the Nizamut Adawlut those cases in which, from the aggravated nature of the offence, they consider the punishment inadequate. This enactment, which the promoters of the petition have so greatly misrepresented, we think exceedingly judicious. It intrusts a limited degree of power to subordinate officers, for fear of its being in any instance abused; but it permits them to represent to the superior court those circumstances which, they think, call for severer punishment than they are authorized to award.—With regard to the discretion which the Mahomedan law and the regulations vest in judges, it is such as few, when made acquainted with all the circumstances regarding it, will be disposed to condemn. A clear view of these circumstances will be obtained from the preamble of the regulation to which we have just referred, with which, therefore, we shall present the reader. 'The Mahomedan law vests in the sovereign, and his delegates, the power of sentencing criminals to suffer discretionary punishment, ( under the legal denominations of *tazeer acobut*, and *seasut*, ) in three cases. First, in the case of

offences for which no specific penalty, of *hud* or *kissas*, has been provided by the law ; being, for the most part, offences not of a heinous nature, the punishment of which is left discretionary, below the measures of the specific penalties, for the correction and amendment of the offender. Secondly, for crimes within the specific provisions of *hud* and *kissas* ; when the proof of the commission of such crimes may not be such as the law requires for adjudgment of the specific penalties, though sufficient to establish a strong presumption of guilt ; or although the proof be such as is required for a sentence of *hud* or *kissas*, when such sentence is barred by a remission of the claim to retaliations in cases of *kissas* ; or by any of the special exceptions and scrupulous distinctions, which ( under the general denomination of *shoobah* ) are considered by the prevalent authorities of Mahomedan law to bar a judgement for the specific penalties of that law. Thirdly, for heinous crimes, in a high degree injurious to society, and particularly for repeated offences of this description ; which for the ends of public justice (as expressed in the term *seasut*) may appear to require exemplary punishment beyond the prescribed penalties ; and with respect to crimes of this description, an unlimited discretion, extending to capital punishment, is admitted to have been left by the Mahomedan law to the sovereign authority of every country in which that law prevails ; as well as to its judiciary delegates. In the adjudication of punishments under the discretion thus allowed by the Mahomedan law, especially in the second of the three cases above stated, it has been observed that the *futwas* of the Mahomedan law officers of the criminal courts are often governed by a consideration of the degree of proof against the party accused, rather than the degree of guilt, and criminality of the act, established against him : and the penalties awarded by them, in such cases, are either adjudged, on insufficient proof of guilt, or are inadequate to the heinousness of the offence of which the prisoner is convicted. It is, therefore necessary that provision be made for determining the punishment to be adjudged by the criminal courts in all cases where-

in a discretion is left by the Mahomedan law ; as well as to guard against the infliction of any punishment, without sufficient evidence of guilt, as to maintain the uniform and adequate punishment of offenders, when convicted, according to the criminality of the offences established against them.'

So far we see little of which East Indians can complain. We know it is objected that they would not like to live under the Mahomedan law. This objection proceeds rather from prejudice than from any sufficient reason. Of what consequence is the denomination of the law, so long as it is not oppressive ? Is there any virtue in a name ? Every system of laws ought necessarily to be founded on the principle of *suum cuique tribuere*, and if there be any other requisite it is, that it be adapted to the state of society. Were we to compare the laws of England and the laws in force here, we should find the advantage very much on the side of the natives of this country. Abstracting the unrivalled excellence of the British constitution, shall we not find on examination that the laws are uncertain, severe, and unadapted to the present state of English society ? Are the penal laws of England its glory or disgrace ? Would the promoters of the petition wish to introduce these into their country, and to place themselves under its sway ?

Few subjects are so differently regarded as law. Nor is this extraordinary. The foundation of law, justice, every one understands, or supposes himself to understand. But the application of this principle is controlled by so many and varying circumstances, that uniformity of ideas is impossible. One thing, however, is certain—that laws can never be perfect, since even the divine laws admitted of change. The code of Justinian was the result of the decisions of centuries ; but into what state can it be introduced without alterations ? The statutes and reports of England are unnumbered and innumerable, and they have been framed in ages when justice and liberty were objects steadily kept in view ; but it would be a hardship to impose them on any people when there is a prospect of aught better. If inquiry were made, why the



Mahomedan law is received as the law of this country, it would appear to be from a principle of forbearance. As conquerors, the British might have placed these lands under the subjection of their own laws ; but being desirous to conciliate the people, they permitted the existence of the law to which the natives were accustomed, only taking upon themselves to alter the law where it appeared likely, and was found by experience, to defeat the ends of justice, and abolishing entirely the horrible practice of mutilation which the Mahomedan law sanctioned. Hence, instead of finding fault, which it is easy to do in all laws, it ought to have been the care of the East Indians to represent their peculiar situation to the Government, to point out the deficiencies of the regulations already enacted by them ; and to show what would be desirable for them with reference to their state and circumstances. These representations could not be unattended to, if any credit is to be given to the eulogiums we have constantly heard on the justice and humanity of the Government in India. And it appears to us that if the promoters of the East Indians' petition had applied for the redress of their grievances to the local Government, to whom has been delegated the power to legislate for these extensive provinces, there were more chance of succeeding in their application than the problematical hope of redress from the British parliament, which has devolved that care upon others.

In conclusion, we repeat our wish not to be considered as partisans, who seek to make out a case. We are well aware, that it is more pleasing to persons to see measures against which they have conceived a prejudice depreciated, however unjustly, than to hear the arguments which might lead to a different opinion. 'He that goeth about (says the judicious Hooker) to persuade a multitude, that they are not so well governed as they ought to be, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers.' Our aim is neither to find fault, nor to uphold existing institutions ; we would rather follow the advice : 'Nothing extenuate, nor set down ought in malice.'

[No. 1 ; August, 1829]



# THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S CHARTER

No. I

THE question of the renewal or abolition of the Company's charter has attracted considerable attention, and undergone much discussion, both here and at home. That it is a question involving deep interests, cannot be denied ; and in whatever light it may be viewed, it must be allowed to be highly important to the happiness and prosperity of India. Prejudice has, however, in a great measure, mingled itself in the discussion of this point. The advocates of the Company have extravagantly praised the existing state of things, as if it were perfect and unimproveable, and treated the abuses and corruptions of misgovernment as merely fanciful ; while the opponents of that honourable body have pretended to discover every possible evil in the present administration.

We confess that the statements of both parties are undeserving of the credit which has been attempted to be attached to them, inasmuch as their representations are disfigured by exaggerations. We are not prepared to affirm either that the Government is so good, as neither to require nor admit of amelioration, or so bad as to call for a radical and total change. But in venturing this assertion, we do not mean to say that it is *not* practicable, in the nature of things, for any other system of administration to be adapted to the circumstances of this country, and that *any* renovation in its present polity would be exceedingly desirable. We beg here to be understood that we profess to be neither the advocates of the powers that be ; nor partisans of their opponents : but that we have come to the consideration of the question, with which we set out, with single and unbiassed feelings. It is our decided opinion that the established Government, with all its defects, is, under all circumstances, as good as can

be expected; and that its transfer from the Company to the King would not be accompanied by the visionary advantages which, we regret to find, are so confidently predicted from the desired change.

We have arrived at this conclusion after the most serious reflection and maturest deliberation, and after the institution of an impartial comparison between the government of this country and that of the colonies.

In pursuing our inquiry, the first point which forces itself on our consideration is, What are the causes of the complaints, which the antimonopolists are constantly urging, with tiresome vehemence, on our attention? These causes will be found to be such as no Government in the world is free from. The abuses and corruptions of other states are ten-fold greater than those of this country. Much as we are accustomed to indulge in the vain and stale boast of the glorious constitution of England, daily experience shows that we are from being a satisfied people; else whence arises the ceaseless din of complaints against the administration of our national affairs; and why do the papers and periodicals perpetually teem with representations of misrule? It is no answer to this question to iterate that it is the privilege of every Englishman to give vent to his thoughts in any manner most congenial to his taste, without the risk of being called to account for his actions, so long as they do not transgress the limits assigned by law. In England, it is triumphantly stated, a man is at liberty to canvass even the expressions and conduct of the first magistrate in the realm, without the fear of an application of the bowstring to put an immediate stop to his presumption. But we have unfortunately heard and read of state prosecutions, got up with the view of curbing an inquisitive spirit and preventing too nice a scrutiny into public affairs. Men have been tried, convicted, and punished by a partial and corrupt tribunal—for what? Why, it will scarcely gain credit, for the enjoyment of the boasted liberty which we proudly claim as our birthright. What more do other Governments? They do not prohibit conversation on general topics,

or the discussion of politics in a fair and temperate manner ; they do not circumscribe the privileges of humanity within narrow and capricious limits; they do not prescribe individuals for the crime of entertaining certain opinions, or mark out a close barrier for human actions. It is only when those opinions and actions are inimical to public peace and safety that the terror of the law is employed for their preservation and security. Leave the Government alone, and the Government will leave you alone in the full fruition of all rational liberty. If in Turkey, it be said, no man's head is safe on his shoulders for a moment, it may be sufficient to answer that it will never be endangered, if he be peaceable and quiet. No Government, however despotic, feels a pleasure in the destruction of its subjects, purely for the sake of revelling in human sufferings : none but the obstreperous and obnoxious need dread punishment. If the Pasha of Egypt has been known to commit butcheries without cause ; it must be allowed that in England more ingenious methods are invented to accomplish the same end. Have not conspiracies been concocted and abetted under the brutal and savage plea of feeling the public pulse toward the Government, and when the inhuman and demonic experiment had been tried and had succeeded, have not its cruel victims been slaughtered in cold blood to glut its vengeance ?

Had such scenes as the above been acted on the theatre of India, what a hue and cry would have been raised against Government; and what efforts would have been made for producing a change in the state ?

But those who are so anxious for a renovation in the Government of this country, ought first to look into the condition of our colonies, and see whether such a system would substantially conduce to our benefit. Bad as every thing may be here, admitting this to be the case for argument's sake, who in his senses would desire the government of the Cape of Good Hope, or of the West Indies, to be substituted in the room of that which at the present instance exists in India? Who that places any value on liberty, or cherishes any regard

for his welfare and happiness, would wish to have the administration of the affairs of this country pass from the hands of its present rulers into those which wield the destinies of our colonial territories? The system of tyranny and oppression that is practised there, with impunity, is indeed without a parallel in the annals of our history. Despotism, rigour, and cruelty, exist there in their worst forms; men are deemed mere animals, who may be plundered and hunted down, as legitimate objects of prey and apoliation; nay, this is but a comparatively light evil—their very lives are held at the mercy of their savage oppressors, and may be sacrificed in mere sport. It would be tedious to enter into a minute detail of all the enormities that are constantly perpetrated in our colonial possessions, without receiving any but passing notice, or being viewed with serious reprobation. Those who doubt the thruth of the statement may satisfy themselves of it by a reference to the accounts, which have been published in some of the English periodicals.

For ourselves, unpopular as the present Government seems to have become, we think it far preferable to that of such a man as Lord Charles Somerset; for the one is mild contrasted with the iron rule of the other. Though our 'yoke' under the former *may* be 'grievous and heavy,' the latter would 'chastise' our procacious murmurings 'with scorpions.'

But if it be urged, that if the country were to be transferred to the King, many important privileges, of which we are now deprived, would be restored to us. This is a mistaken notion; for we are firmly persuaded that no such restitution would be made.

A modification of the charter is conceived to be requisite for the purposes of commerce. The abrogation of the Company's monopoly would, we are told, lead to the opening of the Free Trade, which would be highly beneficial to the interests of both England and India. It is a fallacy to suppose so. What would be gained by one party would inevitably be lost by the other—that is, the advantage would rest on the side of purchasers, while speculators would be the sufferers. When a speculative scheme is confined to within a limited circle, it



thrives much better, than when it is shared by a great number.

With respect to the freedom of the Press, it is absurd, problematical at best, to indulge the expectation that a change of Government would bring with it emancipation from the restrictions with which it is at present fettered. What is our experience on this point? In what part of the regal colonial dominions the press enjoys franchisement, we do not know. On the contrary, we know it to be equally shackled and paralyzed in its energies in the colonies as here. And we are satisfied, that if India were to be under the Royal Government, ministers would be in no mood to accede to the demand of placing the Press on the same footing with that in England. At the Cape of Good Hope, the Press is said to be free; yet it has been suppressed no less than twice; and though it has been as often re-established, no reason exists for imagining that it is not as much enthralled now as ever. With all the boasted freedom which the Press is said to possess at the Cape and other parts of the King's colonies, it may be stated, without risking the hazard of contradiction, that its licentiousness has no where been carried to greater lengths than in this country, despite the ignominious restraints imposed on it. The only sensible disadvantage under which it labours here is, that the liberty of setting up a paper, or any periodical publication does not exist in India, and that a license must be obtained for that purpose. Serious as this evil is, it is counterbalanced in some measure by the risk of suppression, which so fearfully overhangs the Press at the Cape. We do not mean to conceal that this danger has been felt and experienced here; but still it is not so sudden and certain, as warning is given off its abuses, and time and opportunity afforded for amendment and reparation.

Our condition would not be bettered in any sensible degree by a change of affairs; nor aggravated by their remaining in their present posture. We can never be here what we are in our native land; and until the institutions of this country are, in some measure, incorporated with those of the parent state, we can never hope to make any approaches

in our expatriated situation to the position which we sustain at home. The habits, usages, customs, manners, religion, and prejudices of the people among whom we sojourn, are opposed to the prospect of a change so much desired being ever effected at least as concerns themselves. There are no two periods in the history of the world alike in all respects ; and there are no two nations who assimilate with one another in every peculiarity of feeling and character. Though England, Scotland, and Ireland, have long been united together in political bonds, and the literature and institutions of the first are prevalent and have obtained a firm footing in the two last ; how many traits of dissimilarity are still visible in the national character of them all ! No exact and definite assimilation can therefore, be well calculated upon between people so different from each other, and so far removed in their various interests as the Europeans and Asiatics. While all countries have suffered conspicuous changes in their outward as well as internal aspect and circumstances, India has, it would seem, been the only exception to the general rule, and remained almost the same without betraying symptoms of any greatly perceptible advancement in the scale of improvement. Her customs and establishments are now what they were ages ago, and her inhabitants have also made no progress in the moral, political, and intellectual balance, compared with the promotion of other regions.

In the consideration of the question in dispute, it is to be apprehended that its merits are invariably made the subject of discussion only so far as it regards our own case, separately from the interests of those, with whose welfare it is more deeply and intimately interwoven. Whether the abrogation of the Company's charter will contribute to the benefit of the natives, or its renewal be prejudicial to their views and concerns, and *vice versa*, is a point too frequently lost sight of the argument; instead of receiving, as it deserves, greater share of attention.

That the natives have nothing to apprehend from either of these events is our firm belief and decided conviction. Their



condition under their princes and the Mahomedan conquerors was miserable ; while their transfer to our dominion has tended greatly to their advantage. Subject as they were to the unaccountable caprices of despotism, they lived in continual dread of forthcoming disasters, which they had not the power to avert, and were forced to submit in necessity to all the exactions of ferocious rapacity and barbarous oppression ; from the intolerable rigours of which they saw no possible chance of escape. From these calamities, however, British rule has at length, exempted them ; and surely no friend to humanity can wish, for a moment, to see the original reign of terror restored ; or desire, for mere love of change, that present certain good should be bartered for precarious advantage. That instances of corruption, profligacy, and abuse, have occurred even under the Company's sovereignty, we are not inclined to deny ; but they are after all few and individual cases ; and bad as they may be, the Company cannot justly be charged with participation in them. For one man who has perhaps suffered injustice, there are thousands reposing in peace and security.

The natives themselves do not certainly wish for a change and it is probably of little consequence to them, whether the Company or the King exercise supremacy over them. Being in the possession of so substantial benefits as the enjoyment of their natural rights and privileges, and unacquainted with the hardships and miseries by which the subjects of native potentates : in the vicinal states are grievously bowed down, it must be a subject of gratulatory reflection to their minds that they are themselves placed beyond the encroachments of tyranny.

The question, which we have been considering embraces so many and so various points of inquiry, that we find it impossible to discuss them within the assigned compass of a single article. We hope, therefore, to return to it in our next number.

E. E.

It is the fate of all governments to be regarded with suspicion and distrust. No system of rule has yet been invented by the wisdom and ingenuity of man, which was imbued with principles capable of affording universal satisfaction. Even the constitution of England, which has been acknowledged to unite in it all the excellences, which could possibly enter into any form of government, and received the unqualified approbation of all the European powers; which is the ceaseless theme of triumphant boast to every Briton ; and which has raised England to its present unrivalled state of moral and political greatness, has yet failed in the one grand and momentous object of satisfying every expectation. The animadversion and censure that are so liberally poured out at times by the disaffected demagogue on the acts of those, who have been called by their destinies to wield the energies of their country, have in most cases been dictated by impotence and folly, without having any determined aim or object to gain, unless it were to abet mischief, or feed spleen and petulance. To suppose that any means could be devised to silence all cavil, and please the taste and inclination of every man in every matter, and especially in that relating to the arduous and difficult science of governing, is to suppose an utter impossibility. Human nature is unfortunately composed of so incongruous materials as must frequently operate in direct opposition to its best interests. The neglected and the despised will always be discontented and envy the happy and prosperous ; and the latter are, again, apt to be unreasonably elated with pride and superciliousness, and therefore to feel themselves authorized to treat those below them with haughtiness and scorn. Conduct like this is naturally and perilously calculated to irritate and inflame the worst passions of the mind, and to sow the seeds of ill-will, dissension, animosity, and vindictiveness.

It has been already stated, that the natives themselves do not desire, or are at any rate indifferent to a political change,

The cause of this apparent apathy may be traced to a feeling of self-security, under which, whether erroneously or rightly cannot be determined, they have allowed themselves to repose. They are probably aware that they would be neither gainers nor losers by the transpiration of such an event come when it may, and have consequently nothing to apprehend either from its arrival, or retardment and defeat ; for they are satisfied that it will be the policy and interest of their new masters to conciliate their favourable sentiments by a continuance to them of their common rights and privileges, and leaving them, as heretofore, in the quiet possession and enjoyment of their goods. But this lulling dream of security would, no doubt be greatly disturbed, if they were to learn that a foreign power was to obtain the conquest of their country ; of whose dispositions and feelings towards them, of whose customs, manners, habits, and institutions, they would naturally and necessarily be ignorant.

Man is not necessarily a discontented animal ; circumstances and his wants make him so ; and to the credit of the natives let it be recorded, that they are endowed with a temper, which can easily accommodate itself to every situation, in which the vicissitudes of time and circumstance may place them. They seek the common blessings of life, and so long as they experience these, they will be satisfied with their lot under whatever changes of fortune. Under their Mahomedan conquerors, they were, it is not improbable, as passive and contented, as they appear to be under our rule ; and if, in the wise dispensations of Providence, the subjugation of India was to be effected by some other European nation, they would, perhaps, pass as quietly from our power to theirs, and be equally satisfied with the new government, so long as they entertained no dread of their common rights and immunities being violated, their persons dishonoured, and their properties spoliated. What may be their feelings and sentiments with respect to the restoration of their own government and personal influence, may be ascertained from the opinion and conduct of all nations. It

must be natural to every people to entertain a predilection for their own laws and establishments, however arbitrary and captious they may be in their operation, as a child naturally cherishes more fondness and affection for its own parents, however strict and severe they may be.

We calculate too much upon the fidelity and attachment of our native subjects. There is not real, disinterested, and unalterable affection towards us, existing in their minds : and we believe, our 'hold on them' arises not so much and so directly from the existence of these qualities in their bosoms, as from absolute fear and opinion of our power to maintain our authority. But if they be really so highly interested in our behalf, it is difficult to account upon any rational and certain principles, how it happens that, whenever we are involved in a contest, they evince so little indifference and coldness for its result. They have never been known to exhibit any peculiar feelings of joy or exultation at the success of the struggle in our favour, and when we experienced a partial and temporary reverse in the late war with the Burmese, they betrayed no evident symptoms of alarm, disappointment, and distress at our disaster. We do not hazard this remark particularly at the state of native feeling which was displayed in Calcutta and its vicinage ; but even here, we perceived no sensible excitement of it at that event. If there were any real means of feeling the native pulse both here and abroad in specialness, it would, perhaps, be hardly discovered to beat with any other sensations than what would indicate the utmost listlessness and apathy ; which appear to be their characteristic features. In a national as well as moral point of view, they are said to be proverbially destitute of the sentiment of gratitude: and conspicuous as this moral defect appears to be, it would assuredly be unreasonable to rely too confidently on their honesty and faithfulness. Our best guard is our strength, and our best security their fears.

The abolition or modification of the Company's charter, we are told, will lead to the removal of many grievances and disabilities, under which both we and the natives now labour, and



the introduction of many privileges which belong to Englishmen, of which they are now stripped. It is hoped that the Company's power will be crippled and the rights of the subject extended. No man can help but rejoice at these circumstances; but what creates a doubt is the fulfilment of these auguries. When it is asserted that every effort will be made to accomplish these ends, we do not doubt they will be used, but whether they will ultimately prove successful is another question. The Company have too much influence and interest to be defeated with ease in their objects.

Whether the means employed for effecting the abolition or modification of the charter, will ever make a successful stand against the combined and paramount influence of the East India Company, remains to be seen. The people of England know little and care less about India, and seldom interest themselves in any question regarding her. Of late only has she excited some attention, but still that is too trifling to vest her with adequate importance, owing chiefly to the preserving and indefatigable labours of a few individuals, who affect to feel a concern in her fate; but no general sympathy has yet been awakened in the public breast, so as to induce it to take an active share in Indian matters. With the exceptions mentioned, this country appears to possess no superior claims on the attention and exertions of the nation in her behalf :- their time, talents, and energies, being more immediately occupied with a consideration of the affairs of their native soil, they are scarcely persuaded to take an interest in those relating to a remote quarter. But although such is the literal case, yet it is surprising with what prophetic assurance some of our statesmen and politicians on this spot pretend to talk of the success of the measures that are being adopted for the accomplishment of the purpose in view :—that of the total subversion of the Company's empire and the charitable emancipation of India from the disgraceful slavery under which she is represented to groan. When people indulge themselves in loud and vehement exclamations of the degradation and thralldom of our Eastern possessions, it seems to be forgotten how much

higher they are elevated from the abject and prostrate condition of our Colonial territories ; and happy will it be for the former, if they are at no period placed in a like pitiful predicament. Men know not the value of a blessing until it is lost ; and the remembrances of forfeited happiness is always accompanied by the melancholy regret of its privation being perhaps imputable to one's own fault. Should the hopes and expectations of these persons be ever realized even with reference to the transfer of India to the King's government, and no beneficial results follow therefrom, but should circumstances on the contrary assume an aggravated form, what will be their chagrin and disappointment? But may be, they are too well assured to dread such a result. They were on some past occasions, it may be recollected, equally positive of the correctness of their speculations ; and in what did they at last terminate? Yet experience, instead of teaching moderation, seems rather to have inspired them with renewed hope and confidence.

Among a variety of other sins laid at the door of the Honourable Company, they are charged with grinding their native subjects with exorbitant taxes ; for the payment of which their lands are liable to be seized and sold, without giving time to enable them to provide against the exigency. The evil is certainly to be lamented, and should be remedied ; but it is, after all, light compared with the risk and danger which the inhabitants of the native states perpetually incur. We speak from personal knowledge, and are not desirous of amusing our readers with theories that cannot be reduced to practice. If the native governments be inconceivably lenient to their subjects in leaving their possessions alone, instead of disposing of them to the best advantage for their own profit, they are not unfrequently visited with greater enormities than violent ejection from their lands ; enormities from which our own subjects are exempt. The zemindars in the vicinal provinces are in the habit of keeping up forces much larger than their means allow, and are therefore necessitated to resort to unlawful schemes and measures for meeting



the necessary expenses. Their habits partaking of a predal character, they live by plunder and rapine, but in all their predatory excursions, the miserable inhabitants are the only sufferers, for they only are exposed to pillage and ruin. Even the zemindars themselves are sometimes forced to amerce their own subjects in enormous sums of money to enable them to discharge arrears of government revenue. On these occasions, very often, the most revolting atrocities are perpetrated to subdue obstinacy, and at times the wretched victim has been known to expire under their infliction.

The sense of the innumerable and lasting benefits that have been conferred by the East India Company, appears most unaccountably to be swallowed up in a sense of the imaginary injuries pertinaciously stated to be inflicted on the country ; but even if they be substantial, as in some instances they are, they are of too minor a character to be cast into the scale. Tranquillity, plenty, and happiness, supply the place of anarchy, poverty, and wretchedness ; and security and abundance that of danger and want ; while also every other benediction, which can improve human lot and render life precious, fills the land, where rapine, disorder, and dismay, spread their terrors before. And for all these blessings do the Company deserve nothing but the severest reprobation that is continually heaped upon them ? Had they done nothing else beyond opening the way for the introduction of Christianity in these benighted regions, the country would have been the gainer ; but it is largely indebted to them for many other invaluable benefits, which it has reaped by its connection with England. The just and equitable administration of justice, the security of person and property, and the enjoyment of other equally estimable immunities, must reconcile the inhabitants of these realms to the overthrow of their own power and the establishment of British influence. It must be a remarkable perversity that can induce a man to disregard all the good that is produced, and rake out casual and unpremeditated injuries, which may have been unintentionally committed, on purpose to set them up as a perpetual

theme to create distrust and dissatisfaction.

There is one point, however, on which we cannot speak of our honourable masters in favourable terms. Their conduct towards that unfortunate class of their subjects, who are recognized under the denomination of East Indians, has been any thing but commendatory ; while a most conciliating tone has been observed towards their native subjects, for whose education and improvement, both, in Oriental and European literature and science, splendid edifices have, at a vast and profuse expenditure, been erected, and a requisite costly establishment retained. But as if this were not a sufficient inducement, the Government have advanced a step further, and thrown a tempting lure to entice at least one class of them to seek instruction. If half the money, labour, anxiety, and trouble, bestowed on behalf of the natives, had been employed on account of the East Indians, an act so benevolent could not have passed without demanding the sincerest gratitude of a despised and neglected race. Surely it can never be urged, that from the closer affinity they bear to the Government they have not a superior title to their consideration and countenance, than those who are removed to a distance from that congeniality by a want of the relative link. Exclusive of moral and political reasons, the authority of Scripture may be adduced in support of their claim, as being of the 'household of faith.' Yet far from receiving the encouraging notice of a beneficent government, this singular class is most strangely left to struggle with its hard fate, and sink in shame and neglect. Were it not for the strenuous exertions which the East Indians are sometimes obliged to make in order to sustain their elevation, their name and descent would soon perish in unmerited obscurity, or commingle with the same unbright stream with those of the nether stock, from which they are partly sprung.

It is on these grounds chiefly that we wish the charter might not be renewed until a solemn pledge was given that something would be done for the above portion of the British community, or a modification made to that purport. The

Legislature has wisely made an adequate provision for the natives ; and it cannot be less, nay, it is, on every consideration, more imperatively, incumbent on it to adopt a similar measure in favour of the former.

Many other alterations might be introduced, and these must easily suggest themselves to the power that alone has the remedy in its hands. Though we are of opinion that the constitution of India admits of a number of improvements, on every account we deprecate the resignation of its sovereignty by the Company.

E. E.

[ No. 3 ; October, 1829 ]

## ON THE COLONIZATION OF INDIA BY EUROPEANS

THE discussions on this important subject have, of late years, been very frequent and numerous ; but I think the advantages and disadvantages of colonization are still as undetermined as ever. But as the measure will certainly very soon engage the attention of the legislature, and as it will, whenever it may take place, very materially affect the condition of the natives and particularly the East Indian race, independently of partially changing the system of policy at present adopted towards this country, the subject in question cannot be too often nor too minutely examined. The following considerations at once present themselves to the mind.

1st.—Will colonization endanger the British rule ?

2nd.—Will it be beneficial or otherwise to the natives in general ?

3d.—Will it affect the Indo-Britons, and in what manner ?

and, 4th.—Will it prove the cause of the introduction of the arts and sciences of Europe, throughout the empire ?

It was observed by a former Governor General, that this was an empire of *opinion* ; and this observation has been widely circulated by those who have been either too idle or unwilling to substitute, for the fallacies of imagination, the dictates of truth. The most superficial observer must perceive that India is maintained in subjection only by *Military Force*—withdraw it, and the boasted opinion of the natives, instead of supporting, would immediately prove the cause of the utter subversion of the empire. It is generally known, and even confessed by our rulers, that the spirit of the natives, in the Upper Provinces in particular, is any thing but peaceable. We have lately read in one of the papers that at Lucknow, during the late Mohurram, prayers were publicly said, for the destruction of the Company's Government !! Now, it is

evident that if a large number of Europeans be allowed to settle in the country, they would form a counterpoise, in some degree, to the hostile disposition of the native subjects ; and in case of internal commotion or of foreign invasion, they will be found to be the only portion of the inhabitants that sincerely co-operates in the defence of British sovereignty.

On the other hand, we must reflect upon the probable effects of this measure upon the minds of the natives. At the renewal of the last charter, in 1813, Warren Hastings stated, at the bar of the House of Commons, that an intimate intercourse of Europeans with natives would lead the former to treat them so as to endanger the country by causing rebellion. This opinion has been frequently attempted to be controverted ; but I think it, generally speaking, founded on long, intimate, and accurate observation of the real state of things, and the character and disposition of the people. It is corroborated by the observations which Bishop Heber makes upon the cruelty and oppressions which the natives suffer from the indigo planters, in those provinces where they have been suffered to locate themselves ; and my own inquiries convince me that the conduct of Europeans to their indigenous fellow subjects would tend to alienate them, and ultimately lead to serious consequences. Besides which, I entertain strong doubts whether Europeans can settle in the country without gradually dispossessing the natives of their lands, and causing thereby incalculable misery and dissatisfaction, which, together with the inimical spirit by which I have stated they are at present actuated, would surely be any thing but beneficial to the country.

Again, it will, I believe, be admitted, that our race will be particularly affected by the measure—and I regret to think we may be reduced to the same, if not a worse condition than the Hindoos or Musselmans. If we anticipate the future by a reflection on the present prospects of our race, what can we expect from the colonization of Europeans, but a state of far greater degradation than we suffer ? Holding the natives in



perfect contempt, would they treat us better than them ? Surely not.

But in one respect the advantages of colonization would be indubitable - and that is, in the introduction of the arts and sciences of Europe, and in their establishment in this country. The Company indeed have never evinced a desire to improve the means of education among the natives ; but, there will not be wanting benevolent and public spirited individuals of all classes, who will come forward to promote the dissemination of the arts and sciences throughout the empire. Already do we see the beneficial effects produced by the introduction of the Hindoo College ; and though some of the Hindoos educated there may *abuse* the *proficiency* they have acquired, yet I am fully persuaded that, in its remotest consequences, the greatest benefits will be derived. Education, by enlarging and enlightening their minds, would lead the way to the subversion of superstition, raise their moral and intellectual character, and ultimately produce a very sensible amelioration in their condition. But this can be done only by a paternal and fostering system on the part of the Government ; they must countenance and establish similar colleges at every town in the *mofussil*—other wise, the noblest scheme that humanity ever meditated would, like a sapless tree, wither and fall to the ground.

It is encouraging, however, to observe some degree of interest, at present, on the part of our rulers, in the education of the Hindoos ; and I am convinced that every person will unite with me in wishing for the extension of this patronage to our class—which, alas ! we have never yet experienced.

Upon the whole, then, we must draw the inference, that colonization would not be beneficial, unless the British Legislature interferes, and materially alters the present system of Indian policy, by admitting natives and Indo-Britons to a participation of privileges, on a similar footing, as far as practicable and expedient, with the Europeans. It is only by such a measure that discontent can be prevented from brooding into rebellion, and the arts and sciences, when established,

can produce benefits both to the governors and governed ; to Britain, and to this, at present, our oppressed and neglected native country. The basis of good government is, as Jeremy Bentham observes, 'the greatest good of the greatest number : ' and I heartily hope this principle the wisdom of the legislature will see fit, ere many years elapse, to adopt in every measure connected with India.

*August, 1829*

S. J.

[ No. 2 ; September, 1829 ]

## SKETCHES OF THE PRESENT STATE OF INDIA

No. I

LONG before the subjugation of India by the English, enlightened Europe had conceived itself excluded from commercial intercourse with the East Indies ; which she at length was enabled to cultivate by Vasco de Gama's marking out an accessible road by way of the Cape of Good Hope. Many nations availed themselves of the opening, but it was England that was destined to act the most conspicuous part in the East : she was most successful. It is scarcely necessary to say how she became mistress of Hindoostan ; nor will I stay to discuss the question of the right of the British to conquer it, and then to secure it effectually to themselves. Fortunately for the country, it is too late to dispute the propriety of conquering and keeping possession of a country on the ground of commercial prosperity ; and it certainly is too late to doubt that a wise Providence has at length, in pity to the people of Hindoostan, put them under the dominion of a nation whose moral superiority and enlightened energies will, at no distant period, qualify that people to rank amongst the most respectable nations of the earth. Independently of the above agreeable reflection, it does not appear to me that India had a right to suffer her almost inexhaustible resources to remain untouched. There is no country on the habitable globe, to the peculiar productions of which civilized society has not some kind of claim. If this principle were generally acted upon, that free intercourse which ought to subsist between all the nations of the earth would prove beneficial to each individually, by enabling each to dispose of a superabundancy of native produce in exchange for that of other countries. Where such a commercial habit is wanting, the people are either the

slaves of a despotic government, or have not yet emerged from a state of barbarity. India may hope to avoid the former, on the ground of her present state ; and what she is rapidly gaining in knowledge will ere long amply compensate her for the loss she might seem to have sustained in the downfall of the former governments. But she has lost nothing by the introduction of a European government in the room of those powers whose imbecility perpetually laid open their subjects to foreign depredations. If a government cannot protect its subjects, and the subjects are incapable of defending themselves and their governors, the inference seems plain enough—that the former are unfit to hold the sceptre, and the latter incapable of choosing a proper government for themselves. Such was the predicament in which the people of Hindoostan were found when the English began by force of arms to endeavour to convince them, that it was militating against the law of nations to attempt to exclude them from participating in a lucrative trade in common with others. This led to a series of events terminating finally in the firm establishment of such a Government as India long required. She has obtained what she wanted, in spite of her pusillanimous children. She has undergone a political regeneration. Her vast resources are thrown open to the world, whereby she commands the gold of many nations to whom she was a total stranger. And every thing conspires to assure her that it will never more be her lot to behold centuries pass away without the shadow of a hope of amelioration.

If we regard Hindoostan as *ours*, what a train of important reflections take possession of the mind ! The Netherlands were disgorged out of the bowels of the great deep, and now constitute one of the props that help to maintain the balance of nations. Who could have dreamt of the possibility of a new nation being brought into existence by the mere accumulation of subaquatic soil in a certain place ! And yet so wonderful a circumstance seems to dwindle into nothing when compared with the astonishing reality that

at this moment the British nation wields the imperial sceptre of Aurungzebe ! India transformed into a European Government ! The frightful chaos of a vast disordered country, of a country now sprawling beneath the feet of a lawless despot—now encountering the reckless direption of devastating marauders—then seeming to obtain breathing time, which ere long proved that they were only fattening for a fresh carnage, and their coffers replenishing for a new plunder ; this chaos allayed seemingly for ever ! Destiny with a mighty besom has swept away, from an immense tract of country, the ruins of crumbling empires and the remnants of tottering Oriental glory. And what have sprung up in their place ? An enlightened government—an organized economy—an improving people. Anarchy has been deposed by order. The sword of Britan, as that of the angel of Eden, fearfully tells the once inexorable tyrants of Hindoostan, what they have lost, they have lost for ever. We do not hear the war trumpet sounding forth terror to the hapless people. The country is no longer torn by the perpetual irruptions of one petty principality against another, nor yet deluged with Mahratta hords. The superiority of Occidental science and the discipline of Europe being brought into operation against baseless governments and the poverty of popular patriotism, the unequal struggle quickly subsided, and the power increased by which the new situation of things is consolidated ; and the professed object of the ruling authorities being the general welfare of the people, add to which the commencement of the auspicious 'march of intellect,' we have a pledge that not a remnant of ancient habits, moral or political, can ultimately exist. And if Christianity, Mahomedanism, and Hinduism be left unsupported by authority, and not suppressed by violence, a time will come when the best, and therefore the strongest, will prevail without a rival.

Such is an outline of the present state of the country, which, in the dispensations of Providence, has become ours ; a country to which we had no manner of right, but which



has, as it were, been forced upon us by a train of the most surprising events. We are now pretty sure of increasing stability ; and existing circumstances, such as they are, entitle us to expect that the 'dark age' of Hindoostan has effectually begun to gather up its clouds in order to depart and be no more. And England may well congratulate herself as the author of the regeneration, rise, and ultimate prosperity of India.

*Sylhet.*

F.

[ No. 2 ; September, 1829 ]

No. II \*

WHILE the historiographer travels with active scrutiny, over the country whose annals he is about to transmit to posterity, he perceives such a variety of circumstances connecting that and the bordering states, that he is constrained to draw in the latter in a greater or less degree into the train of his narrative ; since without it he finds it impossible to convey an adequate idea of the influence the one exercises over the other, into the minds of his readers. The weakness or power of a nation is developed by the tone of surrounding states. They are either passive from the dread of the superior power of their neighbour, or insulting it on account of its infirmity. Thus Napoleon while he could only frown upon the proud stability and national disdain of England, pushed on his operations against less secure people.

In this country the feature of the successes of the English is to be compared with the invincible effects of Bonaparte's achievements, which, though it seldom encountered impediments without overthrowing them, yet experienced some sad reverse. The only difference is, that he was checked in his

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\* Erroneously printed as No. I. (Ed.)

ambitious career and thirst for unbounded empire by civilized nations, whereas the English were non-plused by the savages, not only by those who bordered upon their spreading territories, but those who were left to enjoy their rude and wild independence in the heart of the country. Those that were civilized (comparatively speaking) speedily yielded to their irresistible arms : but the barbarians bid them pass on, and not molest them. While the refinements of the imperial court of the great Moghul, or rather of the Mahrattas that had wrested the sceptre from his arms, gave up in despair what they found it too hard to retain, some of the Khundaits of Orissa and the Paligars of the Dukhun still continue to perplex the potency of the British Government. They are still independent.

It might, however, be observed, that though our Government could have been successful in subjugating the independent tribes that line, and in some instances jut out into the very heart of our territories, the conquest of them could not be of importance beyond the securing of the villagers, that are placed within the reach of their occasional incursions, from being plundered, and sometimes butchered with impunity. The expense that would necessarily attend the maintaining of the country conquered from them, would never be repaid by the scanty resources that are available.

Leaving those savages, therefore, for the present, we shall take a short survey of those of the native powers by whom we are nearly surrounded, and endeavour to point out the nature of the influence their vicinage to British India has on the latter, and *vice versa*. They have all been either effectually subdued by us, or hold their liberties because we allow them to do so. We suffer them to manage the affairs of their countries, in a manner something like what Napoleon allowed the sovereigns of the kingdoms he overcome to do. He set his own kings over them ; we do that, and in addition set political incubuses on them, in the shape of Political Residents, Agents, and Commissioners, to keep them in *proper order*. To some of them we display a formidable body of

our troops, and force them to be quiet ; others are constrained to maintain a few thousands of our warriors at their own expense, for the purpose of protecting them against the unprincipled encroachments of a more hostile neighbour ; and others again are forced to receive residents, and submit as well as the rest to their counsels.

A question arises in our minds on the point of fact just noticed. Is it simply the object of our Government to hold the native powers in state of military thralldom with a view to protect our own frontiers ? Or to afford security to them against their enemies ? If the former, then one of the laws of nations might have been held inviolate by our barely guarding our own boundaries at our own expense. Had the native powers above referred to been our tributaries, which I do not think it is maintained, even then it does not appear regular for us to prosecute them with the presence of our own forces. Let us, on the other hand, examine the condition of only two of the states thus circumstances, namely, Hyderabad and Nagpore. Both are held under the terror of subsidiary forces.— It might be asked, who is the enemy of his highness the Nizam from whom he can now dread any attack ? It cannot be the Nagpore Mahrattas ; for they are checked by a subsidiary army. It is not the once terrible power of Mysore, that he can have now to fear ; we are masters of that kingdom. The Pindaries have been overwhelmed. His highness might now at least be relieved from his trammels, the British troops he is required to maintain might be withdrawn, and the tract of country ceded by him for the purpose of compensating us for the expense of devoting an army to his service, might be restored to him. He has a very extensive army of his own ; a very respectable portion of it have been trained up after the European discipline, and are commanded by European or East Indian officers. These troops would be more than sufficient to protect his territories against foreign invasion. Any further interference on our part, therefore, in the affairs of Hyderabad, might be waived as a breach of the law of nations. We cannot be at liberty

to force upon any independent government ( for such Hyderabad is allowed to be ) a protection it does not require : especially as that protection was originally accepted when there was danger to be apprehended from Tippoo, and the Mahrattas,—a danger which no longer exists.

Nagpoor might have required a subsidiary force, had not the quarters from which it might have cause to apprehend invasions been kept in check by the British arms. It has nothing to dread from the Hyderabad side ; nor yet from the countries over which Holkar and Scindia once ruled.

These remarks would be applicable to most of the other native powers, who are all placed in terror of our nod. If the subsidiary troops were removed into some commanding part of our own territories, and near enough for either prompt offensive or defensive operations, every purpose of safety would be answered.

Under the present plan of policy pursued by us, it would be folly to conceal that the dread of plucking down upon their devoted heads the matchless armies of their upstart, but more potent neighbour, cannot otherwise than be regarded as a matter of *wisdom* on the part of the native powers, to agree to retain though it were the mere semblance of royalty, and to avail themselves of the license granted to them of laying their own country desolate with the broken sceptre they still hold in their despotic hands. Can we imagine that the reduction of their political tone, and the privilege of tyrannizing over their subjects with the subsidiary forces to stand by them is a measure adopted by us in order to suffer the native powers to waste themselves by persecuting their own people ? We cannot suffer ourselves to indulge suspicion of a notion which cannot be otherwise than revolting to common humanity. At the same time, it is impossible to shut our eyes against the glaring fact, that the impunity granted to the native powers, who have subsidiary forces to protect them on their thrones, is in the nature of a warrant for fearlessly exercising a species of despotism, which would startle the people of Europe could it be fully described. Far, far better would it be for the people thus circumstanced to be



enrolled in the number of our provinces ; and it would be really humane in our Government to take away the countries of the native princes, and extend to their subjects the incomparable privileges, and wonted protection we are permitted to enjoy under our Government. But when we reflect upon the overgrown extent of our possessions, we conclude that it would be sounder policy to cease to intermeddle in the affairs of the native sovereigns, and prevent the ambition of ultimately numbering the neighbouring independent sovereignties among our Fiscal districts, from having the smallest weight in our political views.

Of the extent of the British power in India, the reader will form some idea, by forming in his mind the picture of a huge colossus, with one leg on the heights of Nipal and the other on Point de Galle, shaking a dreadful lance over the heads of a host of kingdoms and principalities, and a multitude of nations and tongues ! From the tip of the right horn of the bay of Bengal to the foot of the snowy Himalays, we behold a vast amphitheatre (on the westward) of crest-fallen potentates, looking up with stupid but quaking amazement to the nod of the British Government. On the northeast, east, and southeast dwell independent barbarians, or savages immersed in the gloom of endless forests or inaccessible mountains.

As it respects northwest, southwest, and the intermediate western frontiers of British India, we are left to conjecture how long we shall be able, with a handful of warriors, to keep in awe our most formidable neighbours, who it would be idle to suppose would fail to avail themselves of the earliest opportunity to rend the military curtain we have drawn before their eyes. But we might fairly imagine what would be the fate of our possessions, were one of them eventually to succeed in throwing off the political fetters with which we have riveted him to his empty pomp within the walls of his metropolis, and by dint of mere desperation which is often irresistible) push with fire and famine, death and devastation, into the centre of our dominions. The rest awaking as from a dream, would be emboldened to rise too ;



and, on our hastening to stay the progress of the invader in one quarter, would reduce us to the necessity of exposing several others, which would involve the tranquillity, if not the very existence, of our empire in the East. Such a circumstance may be very remote, but it is nevertheless not beyond a possibility ; and if the possibility be granted, the reality of it may be experienced when we least expect it. It cannot surely be believed that the spirit of the bordering chiefs has been as effectually subdued as their power : they who have once tasted the sweets of independence, and have been supreme on their thrones, have it not in their nature to refuse to have bitter sighs at the prostration of their political rights. They cannot forget that they have been compelled to surrender their privileges in spite of themselves. They know that we smile at their malice ; they feel that we despise their power ; and they burn with shame, because we have presumed often to dictate rules to them, even in the management of their internal affairs, by which we have completed their disgrace in the eyes of their own subjects—a species of degradation most acutely felt, and the sense of it vindictively indulged in the breast of an oriental man of consequence. We once trembled for our safety ; they now quail beneath our feet. To know and feel all these, and not wish to trample upon the cause of them, is impossible.

Our stability lies not so much in the magnitude of the armies we maintain, as those armies being regularly paid ; such an effectual stimulus to the valour of soldiers is wanting in the inefficient, though numerous troops of the native powers. Their armies are generally twelve months in arrears of pay ; and no manner of provision is made for the invalid or his penurious family, though the soldier fall in the service of his king and country. Any apprehension of their meeting us on equal grounds, must be idle for a long time to come. Meanwhile, it is to be hoped we shall be able, by a multiplication of European settlers in the country, to preclude the possibility of our being driven from the land which we have gained at the enormous price of the blood of our ancestors,

and into which we are pouring generations of those who are not yet sensibly concerned in the affairs of the Government to which they are born liege subjects ; but who would fall victims to the long harboured and cherished detestation of the eastern rulers against the name of Englishman.

*Sylhet.*

F.

[No. 4 ; November, 1829]

No. III\*

THE causes of the rise of nations and their progress towards their fulness, are so various, and occurring at such distant periods from one another, that a comparison of them is not easy, and, indeed, seldom very satisfactory. We confess that we feel ourselves at a loss to hit upon any of the existing sovereignties of the habitable globe, or those whose downfall and extinction keep alive the reflection that sublunary glory is pregnant with the germ of decay, in order to raise a just comparison in our minds between the rise of the British power in India and those nations which are either now in being or have passed away like a dream. But we may profitably proceed to record one of the features of the rapid growth of our sway in India, and the no less sudden fall of the oriental power in the circumstance of humiliating condition of such of the native Rulers as have now no country which they can call their *own*, being, with their once free people, amalgamated with the subjects of the British Government. While we recount the termination of their liberty, we shall have a lesson before us of the remarkable though inscrutable proceedings of the Ruler of the ends of the earth.

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\* Title changes as *Sketches of the Present State of British India* from this instalment. ( Ed. )

We had occasion to observe, in a former number, that the proverty of popular patriotism rendered a people unfit to choose a Government for themselves, and that the incapacity of their rulers made them unfit to be intrusted with, or continued to hold, the reins of Government. A denegation of such a position cannot be maintained without the concession that where a weak prince rules, those whom he rules over are weaker still, and the united imbecility of both exposes their liberties to the encroachments of those whose power is cemented by their wisdom and the patriotic unanimity of their subjects. An impotent government is no government at all ; and no people can exist without a government. When a nation is brought to such a pass, it is ripe for a change. The English made their appearance in India at *such* a period of its political state ; their introduction was certain, and their prosperity unavoidable. The infirmity of the people who were placed under the control of princes whose unprincipled abuse of the law of nations was not only winked at, but abetted by themselves, had long ago enervated the hand of power. They saw the British power acquire stability ; and it ought to have been their wisdom to conciliate them by submitting to those sacred maxims which cannot overthrow a nation, but set it on a basis which is venerated by the civilized world. The prince blinded by this vain arrogance, and the people no less by their slothfulness, mutually helped each other to plunge into the gulf of subjugation, which the wanton aggressions of the native powers had compelled the English to open for the destruction of their expiring independence.

We do not here refer to the comparatively free Indian Governments, whom we had occasion to bring to the reader's notice in our last number ; but to those who now rank rather unduly low in the scale of respectability in vogue by the introduction of our sway in India. We refer to the Nabobs, Rajahs, and the rest of the nobility who once composed the pillars of an oriental empire, who while they did homage to the emperors, were indisputably ( many of them ) supreme lords over their respective clans. They formed a kind of a singular fede-

ration over which the crown of Delhi was chief head. Some were tributaries, others were seemingly subjects, but at the same time exercised a degree of authority within their little possessions which were rather too extensive to be tolerated by a Government conducted according to European modes of jurisprudence and political economy. We do not contend that that form of polity, which by permitting tributaries and subjects to wield an undue control, and to possess the power of life and death, reduced the people to extreme wretchedness, and thereby weakened the sinews of the state, was not both unsafe and opposed to the feelings of human nature; or that the petty despotism of domestic tyrants should be allowed to subsist with impunity: on the contrary we rejoice that the days of political persecution have passed away, and hope that they will never more be revived nor endured. Yet who can help being struck with the posture in which the native chiefs and nobility now stand? Have they bowed their ready necks to our yoke? Yes. Are they refractory? No. What are they then? Still the only real nobility of Hindoosthan. They still command resources of large estates; but their humiliation is completed by their not being deemed *yet* fit to serve the state in such capacities as are more suited to their means of display, than of those who must needs pass through a variety of degrees of probation ere they can hope to support the rank of the aristocracy, and who at last leave the country to put on what face it can at the mockery of the nominal acknowledgment of the respectability of its indigenous chiefs. If this be sound policy, if this is the mode of perpetuating a supposed attachment of the natives to our Government, we should, at the same time, not overlook that the selfsame policy, and that same unlikely plan of retaining the affections of the natives must be perpetuated, and render the necessity of strengthening ourselves by some means, whereby the indignant though stifled feelings of a conquered people might be prevented from blazing up when the moral fetters whereby they are captivated will begin to appear as a phantom, when the veil will be removed, and the scope of our policy be



no longer misapprehended. 'We possess,' they will begin to reflect with truth, 'the whole of the resources of the nation—every inch of ground is ours—we have wealth at our disposal—our fellow countrymen are as brave soldiers as any in the world ; and we have the neighbouring powers, who as they themselves long to be entirely freed from the thralldom of a foreign Government, cannot but readily unite with us in asserting those rights which we are entitled to as citizens, and as men of property and education. But we are placed on the wrong side of the scale of British Indian repectability'.

It has often been asserted, that the natives have uniformly avowed their attachment to and preference of the British government. And it is universally conceived, that there is no people on earth marked with such dissimulation as those who are placed under our rule in the East. We feel ourselves at a loss to reconcile these two ideas ; for what faith can we safely repose in those to whom we will not allow common honesty of motives ? How is it possible to dwell with any prospects of tranquility among a countless multitude of rogues or knaves, nevertheless whose natural rights we trample under our feet by the law of conquest : but whose strongest asseverations are the offspring of consummate hypocrisy ? If duplicity is the ruling principle of the nation we have subjugated, ought we not to be extremely upon our guard in proportion as the mighty weapon of 'knowledge' is liberally distributed among them ? We are their masters ; but let us not be blind to the reality, that they *feel* that we are indeed such. They feel too that they are next to nothing, it is not unlikely that the consciences of those who pronounce the sentence of universal insincerity on the natives of this country, whisper to them that the odious principle is at least reasonably indulged, and that the latent desire of every man's heart, to participate in the honours of his own country, must needs bear its native tone within him; but which the peculiarity of British Indian administration has a tendency either to annihilate and so render man passionless, or to make its gratification the more worthy of pursuit. Probaly *their* not being permitted



to gratify it, obliges them to put on that dissimulation which might have that very object in view, which being conceded to them would make them worthy of trust. The worst sort of dissimulation, however, we know of, is, we conceive, political insincerity. At the time when we pledged ourselves to respect the rights of the natives, was it clearly understood that they were not to be entitled to those distinctions which we were preparing for our own countrymen in the administration of the affairs of India? That while we reserved for ourselves all the lucrative and respectable stations in the Government, they were to be the bearers of our slippers? That we were to be their gods, and they our obsequious worshippers? If they did agree to such terms, who will deny that we had the merit of overreaching them in broad daylight? If they did not, then we know not why they should be stigmatized with consummate duplicity. It was a successful political imposture, and such it must be regarded by them when they are a little more enlightened. Perhaps they perceive it even now; and should it be the case, the insincerity of their conduct is probably the effect of a piece of profound policy, and their professions of attachment to our government is a sort of a mockery of our unreasonable credulity.

The only tokens of goodwill we exhibit towards the respectability of the natives, are the complimentary gifts of honorary robes and Betel or Paun, bestowed on them upon ceremonial occasions. Such empty pageantry may for a moment flatter the vanities of a dishared people, but mature reflection (in which they are by no means defective) cannot but persuade them that a suit of clothes, however gaudy, or a handful of leaves, however spiced and perfumed, are but poor substitutes for those really substantial marks of respectability which we liberally bestow upon our more favoured countrymen, and but insignificant returns for the enormous taxes, &c. and their ready submission to our laws, which they contribute for the welfare of the community at large.

It must be owned that they are in many points of view

better off under our rule than they ever could have been under the pure arbitrary systems from which they have been emancipated ; but is such a persuasion the limit of human desires ? Their persons are not now exposed to violence or insult, nor are their riches subject to be plundered by lawless despots. But is a man's person and his wealth his only property ? Has he not a property in the administration of the affairs of the country, the rights of which have been pledged to them ? Has he no claims to honourable preferment for services which he is not loath to perform, and which he might be conscious of possessing abilities and rectitude to discharge with credit to himself ? But which of the Nuwabs or Rajahs or other great men of the country may, under present circumstances, aspire to fill situations more respectable than those of Sudur Ameens, Sirrishtadars, Daroghas of the police, &c. &c. ? With a solitary exception or two, none of them ever stoop to solicit any of those appointments, which are, by that means, occupied by those who before were scarcely permitted to touch the footcarpet of the former with their turbans. The dregs of the people are as it were dragged from obscurity to be honoured with the subordinate situations in the service of the state, probably because they have acquired a smattering in the Persian language to the extent of reading a Durkhast, penning a Roobukaree or Fysula, or taking a set of depositions or Zubanbundee. Supposing that the nobility of Hindoosthan were not deemed respectable *enough* to fill the higher ranks of administration, there is no *medium* of offices between the latter and the former to which the aristocracy could resort. They are left to indulge the chagrin of their hearts from which they can hope to find no manner of relief. And yet we calculate on the inviolability of their attachment to our Government !

Such a state of humiliation can tend no otherwise than to suppress the nobler sentiments of humanity, and to extinguish those feelings of propriety which we seek to find in the composition of the natives, but which our economy serves to

root out effectually. It is creditable to our Government to reward the diligence of those who have approved themselves worthy of promotion. But to do it in the sight of a crushed and excluded nobility who ought to have equal, perhaps superior claims to consideration, argues a palpable defect of policy. Some field of usefulness should be thrown open for them likewise, in which they might engage themselves without a blush. The absence of such a means of securing the attachment of a respectable class of our subjects, a class that alone can be regarded as powerful, argues an anomaly in a well regulated economy. We are firmly of opinion that were petty *judicial* criminal, and revenue courts to be expressly established subordinate to the present Moofussil courts, and filled with individuals a little more respectable than those who now occupy the Moonsiffdaries, and Daroghaships, salary would not be an object with the native nobility. Abuses of trust will be met with, but they are found in every country under the sun. The present modes have given satisfaction in no quarter ; nor will they, so long as the offices are filled with those whose only motive of employment is the acquisition of pecuniary aggrandizement. The prevailing motto with them is

Sipossis, recte ; si non, quocunque modo rem !

It may be suggested, that by the plan we recommend the influence of the aristocracy in the moofussil might be promoted, and create danger to the state. Such a hint would disclose the secret, the fatal secret which we have certainly cause to tremble at. It cannot but be impolitic to suffer a justly dissatisfied nobility to subsist in the midst of us, with a lasting sense of their degradation, and without the shadow of a hope of recovering what they reasonably claim. They should be deprived of their venom ; and the only way to do it is by convincing them that they are not singled out as the most suspicious and unworthy class of our subjects. Let their degradation be taken away, by making it worth their while to support the claims of a state which, while it helps to make its poorer subjects opulent, does not make the riches and

other advantages of the opulent merely the sources of revenue.

*Sylhet.*

F.

[ Vol. II, No VI ; January, 1830 ]

#### No. IV

It is generally understood, that the most effectual and indeed the only way to govern well, is to acquire a correct knowledge of the characters and feelings of those over whom we rule ; and it might be added, that the surest causes of failure must lie in the groundless persuasion of the voluntary submission of the people, in a new government there is not only a double object to be had in remembrance, that of overcoming long acquired pernicious modes of jurisprudence, and that of imparting juster notions of the nature of the rights of both the rulers and the ruled, but the time for using the means whereby we propose to instruct them, should be adjusted in such a manner as to render a failure and consequent loss of respectability improbable. It is not the present irresistible power of the state that *really* enforces the respect and attachment of the subject. For a short season the blaze of some splendid victories, the superior tactics, and the novel policy of the conquerors, may have the effect of stupifying the minds of the conquered and obliging them to yield a seeming hearty co-operation to the measures of the new rulers; but the time arrives when the mind resumes its native action from the very circumstance of its recent torpidity, and brings with it a degree of energy that at times shakes the new political fabric to its very centre. To seize opportunities of insinuating itself into the *feelings* of the people whose ideas begin to be impressed with correct notions of the power, the principles, and the practices of the ruling authorities, is a point which no politician should be incapable of resolving into a



decided maxim of government. It requires no little skill to remodel the confused materials of a ruined state. And the first stone towards the erection of a new and durable economy, should be the acquisition of a consistent knowledge of the characters of the people. Concessions made in the beginning might have had some tendency to conciliate the passions of the multitude; but if they have been dictated by any thing short of sound justice, in process of time they will amount to absolute evils, to eradicate which the exercise of the strongest power of the sovereign is of ten required. To refuse to concede any thing in the fervour of success, is to forebode nothing short of slavery to the vanquished.

With reference to British India, what did it absolutely require at the hands of the English? It is said, they stood in need of being emancipated from a state of despotism. In other words they required to be restored to that freedom to which every nation upon earth has a natural title. They required to be placed on a similar footing with the civilized portion of mankind. That they were not fit to receive *then* the best boon that can be bestowed upon rational beings, is a point which cannot be correctly ascertained without a competent knowledge of the character of the people of British India. The docility of their dispositions is not disputed; which feature of their character seems to have been altogether overlooked by the primitive politicians of newly subdued Hindoosthan. Perhaps their purblind policy never contemplated that a few years more would render the foundation of government they were then laying, too infirm to sustain the importance to which it would naturally arrive. The people were ready to receive any form of administration; yet overlooking entirely the glaring fact, they suffered a golden moment to pass away,—and so long as they found it easy to make successful arrangements for prosecuting a profitable mercantile career, the consideration of other matters, which should have been the first and not the last thing attended to, was neglected. Because the charter of the Company precluded the introduction and settlement of Europeans in India, did they imagine that character



was to be eternal ? And did they not foresee that even the existing practice of Europeans forming connections with native females, was the earnest of the creation of a multitude who would in time amount to a respectable portion in the bulk of the nation ? No ; the term of the charter was all that seemed to occupy their attention, as if, after that, the people of India were to be given back to Oriental tyranny. That they did think it likely the king of England would establish a *British government*, is very problematic, since, had they contemplated such a circumstance, they would, or at least should, have commenced preparing the minds of the people for a local legislature, as well as enforcing on them an executive government, of which they would form a portion of the members. They were simply given to understand, and they believed it for many years, that the Company were the real sovereigns, and they the subjects of no body else. The delusion is now being dissipated, and it is impossible not to foresee the result.

There was a complete mistake of the character of the people, and indeed of human nature itself. A system of legislation founded upon a defective and obsolete jurisprudence (for such the Hindoo and Mohammedan codes really were) could never arrive at perfection ; here we perceive how truly difficult and almost impossible it is to render fresh enactments reconcilable with the welfare of the people. It would not be difficult to decide whether the establishment of a King's court at the Presidency is calculated to secure the attachment of all classes of the nation, or the crude forms of judicature in the Moofussil. A very short period of trial would have sufficed to show, that the character of the natives was such, that they could not choose otherwise than give the preference to the execution of the laws of England than those under which they had lived so long.

Every nation has its prejudices, both of a religious and moral nature, but which of the two should have been consulted for the general benefit of India ? Surely not the former, for the endless disagreement in the various Hindoo sectaries would

render a hope of any thing like affording satisfaction to them preposterous. Notwithstanding which, the attempt has been made ; and the prejudices of the people have been perpetuated at the expense of the public weal. We say not that their religious prejudices should have been altogether despised ; no, but they should have been made a secondary consideration. The first should have been to introduce those very laws and securities, which have given so much satisfaction in the establishment of the Supreme Court in the town of Calcutta. Who is so ignorant as not to know that it is a characteristic of the natives to be more tenacious of their civil than their religious rights ? And it must be idle to presume that, because they scrupulously adhere to the superstitions of their forefathers, they would slight the advantages of a purer civil and moral code of laws, than those which have been dragged into operation from nearly a total oblivion. The presumption would be a tacit avowal of a total ignorance of their character.

In the further pursuit of our inquiry into the characters of the people we govern, it is not sufficient simply to ascertain to what extent their physical capacities will endure our power of command over them. We reject the idea that our Government has hitherto been simply making an experiment of the character of its subjects, with reference to the forbearing nature of their disposition. Nor can we suppose that its sole object is to show that it can command submission. That man will submit when he is obliged to do so, is a truism. But submission should be made use of for his benefit, his sole benefit, unless we place ourselves in the situation of the West India planters. To a very considerable extent, his wishes should be consulted, if we would make him satisfied with our rule and own it to be beneficial for him. Have the wishes of the people of India been called for ? How have *they* communicated them ? By what channel ? The source from which the local authorities derive their information cannot be depended upon as accurate. The peculiar circumstances under which they are placed render it so. Their knowledge is acquired

merely (we shall venture to say) from the intercourse they have with the natives in the execution of their public duties, with the Umlahs, Mookhtears, plaintiffs, and defendants, who are all concerned in deceiving those from whom they wish to obtain, some promotions, and others a successful result of their suits. There is not a set of courts in the world where such scenes are not exhibited ; but who will venture, by merely peeping into courts of judicature, to maintain that the character of a whole nation is to be ascertained by a development of the sycophancy and peculation of court officers, the chicanery of lawyers and attorneys, and the selfish allegations of litigating parties ? Beside the channels just noticed, we know not whence they can have arrived at the information, that the people are satisfied with the measures of Government.

In countries where caste does not preclude familiar social intercourse, the character of the people is readily obtained in the common course of free and undisguised converse. But in India such a means of examination is out of the question. It will never do to stamp their character among ourselves, when we meet on equal terms round our social boards and not one Hindoo or Moosulman in our company to rectify our blunders, and have an opportunity to develop their sentiments. We can never confide in the opinions of those, in whose presence the most respectable native makes it a point to conceal his real sentiments, and whose mercenary Umlahs fold their arms as if they were in the presence of the Deity.

The character of the natives, as the devotees of a wicked and demoralizing superstition and debasing idolatry, should be regarded with much compassion. If their imaginary deities are believed to take a pleasure in obscene songs and lewd gestures, who can be surprised at their worshippers delighting in filthy converse, or wallowing in a series of deteriorating immorality ? The only thing that can mend their manners, next to their conversion to Christianity, is the encouragement which we ought to afford them to partake of the benefits of enlightened *society*, destitute of which the best education in

the world will be inadequate to render them genteel—a remark which is applicable to the people of the most civilized countries. Would we rescue them from practices which we abhor? We should confirm our sincerity by not making it a point to discourage their aspiring after the only thing that is likely to reform them. Would we make them what *we* fancy ourselves to be? We should cease to fancy that we shall contract disgrace by associating with those whom we wish to see enlightened. *We* never knew an instance of the *civil servants* of Government in the Moofussil, deigning to be seen in the company even of a Qazee, Pundit, Suddur Ameen, or Surrishtahdar. But it is the fruit of a *distinguishing economy*—a mercantile monopoly; and it must be very amusing to hear the privileged people lamenting the exceptionable manners of the natives of India! A Qazee or a Pundit of the court is just what the Honourable Company's Advocate General is in point of rank; besides which he is a petty Judge and Magistrate, with the Sudder Ameens. The Surrishtahdar might be compared to one of the Secretaries of Government who has a whole office to manage. Let a covenanted civilian be appointed Surrishtahdar; what would be the difference of his respectability with that which a native holding the same rank possesses? The case is plainly this, that the present system not only shuts out every body except the covenanted servants of the Honourable Company from offices of respectability, but also closes the door of reformation against the people of Hindoosthan. What if, as Christians, we abhor the idolatry of the Hindoos, as men professing to be enlightened, we should, even according to the dictates of Christianity, (to save our claim to humanity), extend to them the rights of man—of fellow citizens. Nothing can exhibit more evidently the character of the natives than the facts above stated. It is astonishing to reflect how much they can bear; and no less so to conceive how, after the ample proofs of patient subserviency of the natives to our Government, the privileges of a British community should be withheld from them.

We have always contemplated the character of the



inhabitants of a capital as by no means exhibiting that of the whole nation. The splendour of a monarch's court or the pageantry of a governor's *Durbar* may indicate the opulence of the people who contribute towards the magnificence of their sovereign and rulers. The frugality of a Julian could no more display the character of the Roman world, than the dazzling ostentation of a Constantine. We are not satisfied that the most wealthy subjects of the Government reside in the metropolis of British India, nor that it is the proudest seat of Oriental literature, nor yet that it represents the manners of an eastern gentry. One thing we discover ; it is that there is a spirit of imitation and emulation palpable in the characters of the inhabitants of Calcutta. Their equipages are in most cases superior in grandeur ; and their houses in their magnitude and internal furniture might vie with that of almost any European resident. These circumstances should teach us, that they are no by means unwilling to be ushered into those further more substantial proofs of respectability which are engrossed by Europeans ; and they further instruct us that the mind of an Orientalist is as fraught with vanity and ambition, as any man's upon the earth. They seek gratification ; and an enlightened government must be sensible of the necessity of affording an adequate field for its operation. Such measures are wanting ; but in addition, the progress of education must serve to inflame those passions, in proportion as the recipients of liberal instructions begin to find the pale within which they are circumscribed too confined to admit of proportionate action.

There is a general hue and cry with reference to the duplicity of the *native* character. There is much truth in this. But we should seriously reflect on the causes which produce so vile an effect on their morals. That any man is naturally more deceitful than another, cannot be believed but by our sapient phrenologists, whose philosophy would apparently suggest, that there is not a native of India whose *skull* does not uniformly bulge out perhaps one-tenth of an inch in a certain



direction, more than that of Europeans. We shall quit their theory, and ascertain by a more legitimate method the causes of the painful reflection, which possesses our minds when we view the cupidity of the natives. Will it be allowed that the proverbial characteristic of the Jews is the effect of the cruel persecution they have endured since the day of their dispersion among all nations ? If to seek to preserve one's-self be pronounced a natural feeling, we find it actuating the brute creation, as well as the breast of humanity ; but when we perceive that even brutes will not endure rough treatment, it would be a libel upon those who possess the capacity to comprehend, that the rights of man are more sacred than those of horses or dogs, to refuse to admit, that those who feel sufferings more exquisitely are rendered less capable of appreciating the absence of the causes of their pain. What makes the Africans abhor, and wage an implacable war against the whites ? It is because they feel in their *conscience* that they are regarded as little better than brutes. The agonies of bereaved parents, children, brothers, and sisters, cannot be conceived unless felt, and even then it would be fruitless to try to describe them. The loss of wealth might drive a Jew to commit suicide. The loss of lands might instigate to revolt ; and national degradation, if it be less powerful to stir up the passions of the few who gather the harvest of their own disgrace, must leave a deep impression on the minds of the people at large, at which we should probably tremble. Attend the private circles of the natives, and you will be thoroughly convinced that they are not so very stupid as to rejoice over the persuasion that the only means left to them of some sort of respectability is the skill wherewith they could acquire riches—and as the *native* courts afford ample means of gratifying their avarice, they eagerly press into them ; and there it is we think we become masters of their character. To assert their claim to respectability in any other way, they are *forbid*—how natural then that they should make gold their god ! When we also reflect that they are not ignorant that their rulers come to this country chiefly for the purpose of making money, they

have at any rate a strong plea for following such respectable examples. The only barrier against their imitating *us* in every thing else is the bulwark of caste ; let that be once removed, and it would have the effect of magic. We should all at once behold a nation little inferior, in their notions of the comforts and claims to respectability, to the most enlightened nation in the habitable globe, if at the same time we open to them the privileges of aspiring to those stations in society which are exclusively appropriated to Europeans, and of having a voice in the legislation of India. Their claims to consideration are not less reasonable than the demands of the Irish Catholics to emancipation, and ere long, they must have it.

So long as the surrounding independent countries behold the present state of things in operation within our dominions they will continue to be inimical to our government. How few of them court to be our subjects ! How truly they despise those that *are* ! If the civil emancipation of British India could be proclaimed, we have a strong persuasion that most of them would forthwith throw off their allegiance to their despotic rulers, and then bless the day on which the people of England set their feet on the shores of the eastern world—the day when Hastings ruled—the field where Lake, where Cornwallis, Clark, and Combermere conquered—the propitious hour when the sighs of a patient people were wafted over seas, roused the wonted justice of their fellow subjects of Britain, were thundered in Westminster Hall, and enforced the magna charta of British India ! What we now allow to be an impolitic measure, would then be impossible not to embrace with exultation, even the *moral* conquest of nearly the whole of our warlike neighbours, and their being enrolled in the catalogue of our subjects would present the most redoubtable barrier against the remoter tyrants of Hindoosthan, that will, likewise, in time learn to govern ;—and who can calculate how far the spirit of freedom might shed its genial rays ?

## No. V

THE internal administration of *our* extensive possessions is not only complicated but curious, and in some degree surprising, when we reflect on the circumstance that, whatever might be the case in other countries governed by enlightened Europeans, in this the proportion of administrators of the laws, compared with the recipients of justice, is as one to a hundred thousand. The economy of the Honourable Company has apparently suggested to their wisdom to allow only one civil, and, in a very few cases, one separate criminal tribunal, to each of the districts or zillahs; one assistant judge, ( and sometimes one registrar, ) is superadded in the larger ones. These tribunals are placed at the *stations* or cities in the districts over which they are appointed to preside. We might advert to the unhappy choice of the stations. They are not formed in the centre of the zillah, which circumstance removes the seat of justice to the distance of 30, 50, and even a hundred miles from those who have occasion to resort to them for purposes of litigation. It is difficult to guess whose convenience was consulted when the stations were formed, since it could not be important whether the European gentlemen resided in the centre or at the extremity of the zillahs, neither could the authorities have chosen the most populous towns on the ground of public convenience. However populous a town might be, its inhabitants form only a very small portion of the aggregate population of the whole district. In large cities there are, very properly, city courts, which, however, would seem to obviate the necessity of stationing the zillah courts also in them. As far as practicable, the zillah courts should have been formed in a central part of the district, to enable the people situated at the extremities to resort to them from equal distances, which would place the whole zillah, as it were, within the immediate control of the authorities.

As a police arrangement, the placing of the thannah at too great a distance from the station affords opportunities to the

Daroghas to exercise ( as they are notorious for doing ) an undue authority, under the certainty that the objects of their tyranny could not, without prejudice to their local affairs, proceed two, three, or four day's journey to obtain redress. People living at these distances from the station, ( the poorer classes we mean, ) seldom have friends there, whose hospitality they could command for their accommodation while carrying on legal prosecutions against their oppressors. We have often seen groups of poor wretches, driven by persecution from their abodes collected together either under some large trees in the compound of charitable individuals, or in some almost roofless huts about the town—frequently going about from door to door to gather by mendicity a handful of rice to satisfy the cravings of nature ; and probably the few pice they obtain over and above the articles of food, by begging, are appropriated to satisfy the *honest* demands of court officers. It is always a hard matter for the poor to obtain redress ; how much more so under the circumstances we have noticed ! The aggravation lies in their having real cause to dread their return home, without the iron rod of justice to protect them against their oppressors, provoked to revenge by their complaint to the magistrate. In civil cases too, multitudes of the poor *ryuts* and cultivators are similarly circumstanced. Where the seat of justice is so far removed, the votaries of avarice will naturally take advantage of the opportunities of oppression ; and in proportion to the means of purchasing the favour of the people at court, impunity will be the more intolerable.

Besides the Sudderameens, Mouloovees, and Pundits of the zillah, there are petty commissioners or Moonsiffs (as they are called) dispersed in various parts of the district whose province it is purely to adjust the disputes arising between debtor and creditor ; for which piece of service they receive a moiety of the value of the stamps that are disposed of, for litigious purposes, to those who resort to their courts. They gain from about 50 to 200 Rs. per month. But taking the larger and smaller districts into the scale, we might fairly



allow 75 Rs. as the average of their monthly income by honest means. All cases that do not involve merely borrowing and lending are required by the Regulations to be instituted in the judge's court, who distributes the major part of them amongst the *Sudder Ameens*, *Mouloovees* and *Pundits* of the station. The parties are of course obliged to travel all the way from their habitations with ready money in their possession for the purpose of instituting *original* suits. Had there been *Moofussil Ameens* in the interior, (as they are *Sudder Ameens* at the station,) authorised to take cognisance of original suits, incalculable benefit would be derived by the people. Why not change the appellation of *Moonsiffs* at once to petty *Moofussil Judges*, and without altering the present plan of compensating them, empower them to decide original suits to the extent at least of 500 Rs. ? The station courts lying open to appeals from their *Kutcheries*, would suffice to secure justice to those who might be dissatisfied with their decisions. Thus, by the source of compensation being made respectable and their income more adequate, it is imporbable but that the native Nobility and Gentry would deem it worth their while to offer themselves as candidates for those offices ? And if with a view to throw open to all classes of his Majesty's subjects an equal field of useful occupation, the East Indians were allowed, (which they are not by the Regulations of Government, with reference to the office of *Moonsiffs*,) nay if they were purposely selected, to fill one third of the offices of petty *Moofussil Judges*, the different characters of the two classes would have the advantage (which the present system does not possess) of giving the people a choice of their judges. Besides which, the local residence of the East Indians would tend to improve the morals of the natives ; and as no man can be comfortable without society, the East Indians would not, we presume, be ashamed to associate with such of them as maintained a respectable and decent deportment. And who will say that enlightened intercourse and superior acquirements would not have a tendency to improve the character of the people ? The measure above suggested would not add to



the expenditure of the public money ; on the contrary, the increased sale of stamps thereby originated, would improve the finances of the state ; at the same time that various classes of people now completely placed out of the reach of usefulness, would be provided for ; and by their being thus afforded the means of respectable support, the nearness of the numerous newly formed tribunals would afford universal satisfaction.

Thus far as it respects civil jurisprudence. In noticing the total want of criminal courts beyond the circle of the civil *station* in the zillahs, we cannot help expressing our *regret* that the facts of Government solely benefiting in a pecuniary point of view by the sale of stamps used in the courts of the Moonsifs, is not overlooked by the people who are so highly praised for their economy. They *suppose* that heir rulers do not consult their comforts and conveniences, unless they derive some pecuniary advantage from it. If the necessity of establishing petty civil courts in the Moofussil was regarded as an indispensable measure, how much more requisite would it not seem to make suitable arrangements for the prompt decision of criminal cases ! There ought to subsist at least as many criminal tribunals as there are civil ones. As the latter might be denominated petty Moofussil Judges, the former might have the designation of petty Moofussil Magistrates given to them. They might be privileged to settle all cases of quarrels attended with or without the consequence of maiming, impositions, breach of contracts, and indeed all such others as might, for the general convenience of the people, and from a consideration of the extreme distance of the European tribunals, more easily and expeditiously be adjusted on the spot. But it may be questioned, who will pay these petty magistrates ? We reply, those who do it in all civilised governments. To say less, would be to assert that the British Indian Government is not what it professes to be, and that it can wink at the sufferings so universally, so patiently and so unjustly submitted to by the people whom Providence has placed under their control.

To deny this would be to acknowledge that it is a matter of indifference to human nature, whether our fellow subjects groan under the present state of things, or that it is reasonable to believe that the people were simply created for the purpose of contributing to the wealth of their rulers.

Justice is *now* administered by a single European magistrate, who has, besides his criminal court to attend to a civil one in an extensive district, (such the smallest zillah may be called when compared with the districts of England and many other European countries,) inhabited by thousands of people all requiring to have speedy justice dealt out to them, and where disproportion of wealth and importance, poverty and *insignificance*, present the most repulsive picture of apathy on the one hand, and suffering on the others. The long experience of the European authorities would have been amply sufficient to justify the assertion, that the inadequacy of the present system is glaring. How is it possible that one or even two or three men can administer an adequate measure of justice to the vast population that is placed under their control, not for the purpose of showing that there is *a* magistrate in the district; not merely that because there is *one* magistrate, crimes will be less extensive or criminals less daring; not *simply* that the people might imagine that because there is *only one* tribunal to resort to, therefore they should take the better care how they break each other's heads, plunder each other's property, violate each other's wives and daughters, cheat each other with impunity, &c. &c. ? There is scarcely a single magistrate, we shall presume, who will not readily declare that the discharge of the duties of his station, when properly attended to, is far beyond his individual ability. The circumstance of authorizing the magistrate (which is a very recent concession) to refer petty cases for the decision of the Sudder Ameen, &c. at the station, cannot relieve the people from the trouble and losses they are cruelly and unnecessarily doomed to suffer.

A poor fellow has his head broken; he applies to the Darogha of his part of the country; the Darogha sends him and

the aggressor of his head, ( who remains sound wind and limbs, ) the former to prosecute, the latter to stand his trial fifty miles off. If the broken-pated individual be incapable of walking from the severity of the pain, he is put into a vehicle made something like a handbarrow excepting the guards on each side, and, at the risk of being tumbled over and breaking his head afresh or being killed on the spot, is transported like a corpse, without the ability to muster up strength enough, at the end of a journey of fifty miles, to say who was the person who injured him, and who the persons that saw him maltreated. He is exposed to the inclemency of the weather, wet, cold, or hot. What wonder if he is just able to arrive at the magistrate's court, give his deposition, convict the offender, hear the sentence, and with all the satisfaction in the world leave, or be carried out from, the court and die outright before he reaches home, or just arrive there in time to give up his ghost without having had time to make a will ? Who, we demand, should be liable to be prosecuted for the death of this man ? The person who wounded him, perhaps not with an intention to kill, and perhaps not fatally ? The Darogha who sent him in an unsafe vehicle fifty miles without the help of a surgeon, through wet, cold, and dry, which was sufficient to kill any *sick* man ? Or shall we pronounce a just reproach on the *present state of British India* ? The Darogha must be exculpated, because he did no more than his duty in acting conformably with the Regulations of Government. It cannot, on the other hand, be proved that the poor man had really died in consequence of the wound he had received. But let conscience decide who was the cause of the death of one of the subjects of his Majesty of Great Britain ?

Again, a poor woman having a suckling at her breast has been maltreated by her husband. She must submit to further tyrannical abuses of the power of her *good man*, and probably be murdered at length, or travel ( to which she has not been accustomed from her birth ) fifty miles amidst the gaze of strangers ( to which she is a stranger ; ) place her person at the mercy of some lewd fellow, who contrives to

cheat her of all her money ; and at length place herself in a strange place where she knows no body, and is known by no one. What wonder if she ere long *walks* the *streets* ? What matter of surprise if besides prostituting herself, the poor babe in her arms falls a sacrifice to the present state of British India ? We would ask whether it would not be preferable, even at the expense of stooping to *purchase* justice by means of a bribe, ( supposing that a native petty Judge of the description we have suggested was more liable to corruption than others,) to save one's self from the alternative of living ever afterwards by the fruits of meritricious practices, and burying a poor helpless infant—the victim perhaps of exposure, or rough treatment on the road, or perhaps starved to death from the jarring motions of a woman's heart having dried up the nutritive fountain of a mother's bosom ?

Again, a poor fellow is robbed of his little all. Penniless he applies to the Darogha who (if he happens to be an honest man and does not send him about his business because he has been handsomely rewarded by the robber) packs him off along with all the tattered vagabonds he can collect in the place where the robbery had been committed. Perhaps he calls upon the *Zumeenders* to *give up the rogue* ; and the *Zumeendars*, if they cannot hit upon the real offender, take very good care to take up such of their *ryuts* who have had occasion to expostulate with them on account of illegal exactions and other acts of oppression, and make them over to the police officer ; who despatches them with a history of his exploits in apprehending the robbers. With them a parcel of witnesses are sent up, who perhaps know as much of the robbery and robbers as the inhabitants of the moon. This motley procession is brought pell-mell into the magistrate's court, and placed before his tribunal. Now it would puzzle my Lord Chief Justice of any the most august bar and his troop of barristers to find out the robber from the robbed, and the witness from the robber.

When a Decoity has been committed or a murder perpetrated within his jurisdiction, the Darogha has to perform



the part, in the first instance (in case of murder) of a coroner. He is authorized to make a Sooruthal or investigation, without the help of a jury, or even a common *punchait*. The next thing he does is to call upon the most respectable people of the place, to say how the murder was committed, why they suffered such a deed to be perpetrated, and threatens to send them to the magistrate, who will refer them to the judge of the circuit when he comes to hold his session and have them hanged. Thus terrified, and not very willing to be bound with ropes, and carried like malefactors, in broad daylight, a journey of fifty miles in the face of their neighbours and friends, (and if they happen to be Zumeendars) their *ryuts*, they readily procure his favour by handsome presents. And the affair is concluded by his apprehending all the poor of the place ; letting such go as can afford to purchase their enlargement ; and sending the rest bound perhaps to be tried for murder. 'The Darogha has been very active' is the praise bestowed on him. By means of such activity he contrives, with the bare salary of 20 or 30 Rs. per month, to make his fortune and retire from *business* éclat !

In case of Decoity the sphere of his *activity* is more wide ; not a *poor* wretch eludes his vigilance ; not a Zumeendar escapes his grasp ; only the vagabonds of the place (how often are those *vagabonds* taken up for murder and Decoity ! ) find their way to the Judge of the circuit, and we shall leave the Darogha to answer at the day of judgment how much he had gained by *the murder and plunder* of his fellow men.

Now we leave it to those who have the gift of common-sense, to say whether it would not be a far more useful and safe measure to do away with the office of Darogha altogether, and in its room to appoint such petty magistrates as we have recommended ? If each of them were paid not more nor less than 100 Rs. per month, would it not induce more respectable individuals to accept those situations ? Supposing there were twenty magistrates appointed in each district ; and supposing the present number of Daroghas in each were 20,



receiving 20 Rs. each per month, by a comparison the difference would appear considerable. But the sum of 1600 Rs. additionally appropriated for the general welfare of the people could not surely be regarded as too great a sacrifice of the public money, since that very public would be benefited by the outlay. A single European magistrate receives 1500 Rs. and more per month. We would propose to abolish that *office*. If it be vested in one person exclusively, as is the case in some districts, or in the person of the civil judge, let him remain, but let him be called judge of the circuit, whose duty it should be made to decide cases of a more serious nature, and periodically to proceed to the seat of the petty magistrates with a view to see that things went on as they should. By such a plan the expense of maintaining the *present* offices of judges of circuit would be obviated ; and their being consequently abolished, would afford the means to Government of carrying our plan of establishing petty magistrates into execution. The duty of the judges of the civil court being confined to the decision entirely of civil suits, they would be enabled to go through more business than the present heavy pressure of 1500 or more cases can admit of. Justice would be more expeditiously dispensed—the peace of the country would be secured ; a respectable body of petty *judges* would be brought into service and the lawyers would not gain less where cases are promptly disposed of, than when they are kept pending for months and years, to the great hindrance of the rapid increase of the bulk of their purses and the universal dissatisfaction and murmurs of the people at large.

*Sylhet.*

F.

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## VI

There was a period in the history of Hindoosthan which should teach any second-rate politician, that however mighty the sovereign may be, the only pledge of the duration of that power could be discovered in the sacred link which it maintained between power and equable justice. Without the latter, the former, as it merely commanded terror, the darling passion of a despot, is like a ball swung round a person's head, which he should take very good care to prevent coming in contact with its whirling neighbour. It was the rash fate of the once splendid dynasties of the emperors of Hindoosthan, to repose less confidence in the beauty of the sceptre of equity than in the pomp and parade of unwieldy armies. The pageantry they courted and delighted to display surely might dazzle the perurious crowd, enrich the favourites of tyrants, and perhaps exite the covetousness of the weak ; but more the ostentatious exhibition of the means of the prince to invite the admiration of his subjects, cannot effect. Such efforts to secure the esteem of the people, plunged in 'gross darkness', which such a transitory blaze of unconceded though arrogated power without political or national economy, pageantry without real stability, and dissipation without an equal diffusion of wholesome laws, such as were respected by the sovereign and only then cheerfully obeyed by the governed, were the evident precursors of speedy dissolution. If we regard the savages that still live independant on the confines of our huge empire, savages who scorned to yield their necks to the yoke of the fleeting emperors that professed to domineer over the groveling lowlanders, we shall be struck with a due lesson of the beauty of that condition of associated man which, while it commands the ready obedience of the subjects, the way in which their sovereign is permitted to enjoy such a tempting *right*, is by attending to the natural principle that its most effectual power is delegated by, not extorted from, the people, permitted to be used, but not to be wantonly abused ; and its security is proclaimed by those suffrages which are voluntarily given because respectfully solicited, in the administration

of justice, in the formation of beneficial rules, ( for written laws they have none ) and in political transactions with foreign states. A representative government then, we conclude, is the most natural and stable under the sun. One cannot penetrate into the free though wild abodes of our *barbarous* mountain neighours without being made sensible of the value of freedom, which, while it has not the boast of riches in the dissipating and enervating luxuries of civilized society, has a far better tenure to bestow upon those, who, though they may, will not endure to be told that to be great they must become slaves, and to be happy they must forego liberty. If they resort to arms, it is to remain free ; and it is perfectly compatible with the irrefragable right, the immutable laws of self-defence, to commence offensive operations, as well as to use every means to circumvent those of others. If they conquer, it is not for the purpose of enslaving, but that they may enrol the names of the vanquished among the sons of freedom. If they are overcome in battle, rather than be the *servants* of their conquerors, they fly with their little all, and in some distant quarter resume their little kingdom, still obey their chief, are still regarded as the foundation of government, its defence, its support, its reasonable glory. If their shame in the eyes of the civilized is gleaned from their wonted ( some call it wanton ) disposition to acts of petty plunder ; the vain self-complacency of those who reproach them is justly stigmatised by those very savages, whose praise it is to have scarcely the necessity of sitting in judgment over cases of domestic robbery, murder, forgeries, breach of contract, nor to exercise the ungrateful and odious task of the censor against the licentious and the lewd, the insolent and the proud, the spendthrift and the boisterous mendicant. Where none are rich, none can be poor. Let us extend the territories of these petty states, give them an extensive field for commerce, but insist upon their pristine mode of government ; if any thing could make a comparison just between one condition of government and another, we should be inclined to place them by the side of the people who were once subject to the great Arthur !

The superiority of our means of irresistible warfare, has made it idle for them to meet us in the level campaign, or even to stand an attack from us in their elevated fastnesses ; we may pursue their flight through trackless forests, and awful glens ; we may succeed in expelling them from the seat of their ancient abodes which we may doom to the rapine of disciplined warriors, and the fire-brand of conquest ; but with all those reckless concomitants of insatiable dominion, their freedom eludes our grasp ; their morality remains with them ; household goods they have none to tempt the rage of sacrilege ; and wherever they go or settle next, we behold the self-same regularity of a representative economy, which marks them out as possessing too much *wisdom* to purchase civilization at the expense of their national freedom, and at the immense price of the loss of their native simplicity, the sweet companion, the kind promoter of sovereign respect for the property of a neighbour, his person, his wife, his reputation, and his civil claims.

We have dwelt with so much interest on the character of our free savage neighbours, from a feeling which we imagine is inseparable from the sympathies of man. Nature has engraved upon the human heart, and the *rules* of a pure Christianity as discovered in the authorized government of a pure gospel *church*, force the image, the indelible image of the rights due to it, and these unavoidable incentives to assert those prerogatives, without conceding which, man must be classed with the domestic quadrupeds and birds ; while his claims to them being reciprocally held sacred in the demands of others, (which is also confirmed by the golden precept of the best of beings in the days of his glorious advent 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself') signally proclaims his matchless superiority over the beasts and fowls of prey. If 'might', as they without blushing say 'is right,' then may man be robbed of the glory of humanity, which floats round his head, by the mute but sanguinary inhabitants of the wilderness, and the foolish but aspiring fowls of the air !

That the question of 'might' has often been coupled with



'right', both by assertion and practice in the British Indian economy, is too notorious to be mentioned with doubts of its reality. It is too great a hobby, a political hobby to be so much as denied; and it is too silly a proposition to have been permitted to appear in its native deformity before the scrutiny of those august assemblies which so effectually assert the civil rights of the people of Britain as well as those of America or Switzerland; not prostrating the importance, much less the dignity of the executive powers, nor dumb nor inert when the latter would proudly venture to trample upon the just expectations of their subjects, and therefore upon humanity. It is the boast of genuine Englishmen, that there is no nation upon earth so excellently organised as their own; and though, if we had the spirit of knight-errantry, we should fling our gauntlet, and question the superior advantages of their mother country, we really feel inclined to join in the boast, and without the smallest hesitation declare, *'We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness!'* 'But whether we shall be able to communicate our *patriotic* feelings to our *native* fellow subjects, and prevail upon them to unite in our enthusiasm is the very question we are upon the discussion of.

In addition to what we have already said we proceed, in the next place, to notice how, or rather to inquire why, in extensive Provinces that comprise the jurisdiction of the Bengal presidency, there is not apparently any vestiges of the very ancient and very natural mode of distributing justice by means of Panchaits or juries, excepting when questions connected with religious prejudices require to be adjusted? Government have very properly deemed it reasonable to allow the natives to settle their religious differences and the difficulties attending the endless complexion of caste, &c. among themselves. But they have by this concession left room for animadversion with reference, to the broader basis of the civil advantages that have, at the same time, and, probably, with a stroke of the same pen that secured their religious rights, been left to the fate of being investigated by individuals



who, while they had acquired a smattering in the Indo-British code at college, not by professional practice at the bar, are totally ignorant of the *lex non scripta* of the land, so complicated, and so extensively varied in the different provinces, and probably heterogeneous in each district, town, and village. It might be speciously urged, that the want of forensic practice is supplied by the civilians being appointed as Registers and Assistants to the Judges, &c. very young, and being transferred from district to district they acquire ( ere they come of age ) a *competent* insight into the *general* usages in vogue among the people ; in which they arrive at *tolerable perfection* ; but when ? When they have begun to find themselves growing somewhat familiar with the unwritten laws of those to whom they have administered justice in the days of their probation in an *equitable* manner, almost by the rules of guess work, and are about to retire 'weary and heavy laden' to try to forget in the land of their forefathers, that they have been Judges and Magistrates, Councillors, and Lawyers and that they have by dint of the glorious 'march of intellect,' left upon the records of the public the amazing fact that beardless youths were sent all the way from GREAT BRITAIN to Hindoosthan to become the rulers of the people, ere the *marks* of their swaddling clothes had been obliterated from their persons, ere they had the capacity to comprehend the rudiments of the science of civil liberty, and read over once or twice the Regulations of the year 1793. But hush ! we *sojourn* in a land of wonders ; we breathe a romantic air ; we feed on the choicest dainties of the earth, and should be exceedingly thankful that India has been swept of oriental despotism ; and indeed of hideous hoary headed Quazees and Moofties of days gone by, its people have had the satisfaction to gaze on the 'youthful bloom' of 'Daniels come to judgement,' dispensing *justice* growing *poor* by their dispensations, and when they had just begun to be fit to be retained on their benches, it was found that they had done their duty, and had nothing more left for them to do, and good souls ! What should they do any longer in the

country than put up the *empty* bags, and then do what was extremely natural, and what is that? Why, go *home* to be sure, and if they could not get into the Direction, go into the country, and for the future have nothing more to do than die as *Nabobs should die in peace*.

A few years back it was the peculiar privilege of the people under the Presidency of Fort St. George, to be restored to the dear right of being judged by their own peers. Munroe! it was thy noble part to perform the magnanimous duty of deciding that important point; that there was nothing more congenial or more grateful to the natives of India, than to be judged by a jury! He maintained his ground unshaken in the midst of the opposition he had to encounter from some of the higher orders of the *Madras English* servants of government. But how signally did he defeat all their whimsical objections, tho' backed by the *positive* instructions of the *Court of Directors*!!! He has left a trophy behind him which will be more durable than the wonders of Elora, more lasting than the walls of Doulutabad! and as he had the felicity to behold the end of his arduous labour, he lived to be exalted to the head of that community, which he had emancipated from despotism, and whose convulsive sobs declared that she had consigned to the tomb a beloved Parent!

It is really very curious that at the time, when Col. Munroe was executing the commission, with which he had been vested, to restore the Panchait system throughout the territories under the Madras government, and at the moment when he was successfully making the necessary arrangement in all its districts, it was the *opinion* of the *rulers* of the *Supreme Government* that such a system was not congenial to the people of Bengal and the Provinces placed under its immediate control! We must here insist upon the absurdity of hoping to meet with correct ideas of the people through the channel of the public *reports* of the Mofussil authorities, upon which we imagine rests the grounds of the opinion above alluded to, as emanating from the highest powers in British India. If the natural tribunal of the Panchait or jury

has been revived in the Dukhun and Carnatick, and received with gladness by the people there, we cannot see that there can be any real impediments to its being restored in this part of India. If the system were restored, the plan of appointing petty Moofussil Judges recommended in our last, would serve to make the advantages of internal adjudication as complete as could be expected. A local judge and jury with local *practitioners* (a goodly *posse* of whom if authorised would spring up) would leave us scarcely to wish for any thing further than the establishment of a representative government.

In the existing system, when questions of inheritance and others more especially connected with the Hindoo or Mohumudan law, are brought to a trial before the judge, himself a novice in those codes, he is completely puzzled ; the case is referred to the native law officers, (the Pundit and Moulvee), whose opinions decide the question of *abstract justice*. In the very face of it, it carries the suspicion of corruption ; and we should on handling their Futwah or Biabustha be ready to say that they *smelt* of bribes. It has not seldom happened, that an opinion given by them on referred cases to-day, has obtained a diametrically opposite exposition of the law a few months afterwards. These facts are not new ! why then are the old, useless, and pernicious modes of trying to award the right of the people persisted in ? Of what advantage can it be to government, not only to tolerate but to continue to enforce those regulations which being too hastily enacted at the expense of the people, very naturally defeat their object. They have not only not answered the purpose of their being embodied, but remain palpable monuments of a complete failure in the British Indian legislation ! a perpetual source of dissatisfaction and murmurs, which have a voice, not in the kutcheries of the Moofussil rulers, not resounded before the gates of the Governor General's palace in Calcutta, not heard in the streets, but mutually intercharged in social intercourse ; and 'he that hath ears to hear let *him* hear.'

F.

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## REMARKS ON HINDOO FESTIVALS

How calm and quiet !

Save (as the Poets say) where the dull drum

Reminds me as I stroll of revelry,

And orgies, and Idolators devout

In wickedness. —

LAWSON

For some weeks past the city of Calcutta has been much enlivened by the occurrence of the festivities and gayeties of the Hindoo Holidays, which commenced so far back as October last, and has since been continued to be observed in the order of their succession. This is a subject at all times worthy of attention, but it must be allowed to be more especially so, when the contemplative mind is, as it were forced, by the unavoidable presence of the object, to the consideration of it. The religious customs of a nation, no less than the political and domestic ones, afford striking illustrations of their character. They are as so many steps by which we arrive at an adequate notion of the state of their civilization.

The most remarkable of these is, that which derives its name from the goddess Doorga, which took place a short time back, and to celebrate which, the native assistants of the different public offices of Calcutta are allowed eight days leave of absence. In some of these offices the christian assistants are also allowed to enjoy a recess from their labours during that period, when such of them as have inclination and means form themselves into parties and proceed on the River for recreation and pleasure.

The Doorga Pooja is observed with great pomp and splendour. For some years back, it has been the uniform practice of the wealthier class of natives who celebrate this festival, to issue printed cards, inviting ladies and Gentlemen of the



christian community to their houses, for whose entertainment they engage bands of English music and give nautches, masquerades and other diversions. None, however, are debarred from enjoying them. The houses are tolerably lighted and well furnished with couches, chairs, peirglasses, pictures &c. As the middle of these buildings is an open area occupying a considerable space, without roof, a covering of red or some other coloured cloth is thrown over the ballustrades by means of cross ropes, from which in some places are seen suspended cages with birds in them, whose soft and shrill notes mingling with the sonorous music of the Tom Tom and the vociferated songs of the native singers and dancers produce a ludicrous jumble of sounds.

In a conspicuous part of the House is placed the 'fabled fraternity'—the objects of the blind adoration of their deluded votaries, consisting of several figures, the principal of which is, the image of the goddess Doorga. She is represented in the form of a female, with ten hands. In one of her right-hands is a spear, with which she is piercing the giant Muhisher; with one of the left she holds the tail of a serpent, and the hair of the giant, whose breast the serpent is biting. Her other hands are all stretched behind her head and grasping different instruments of war. Against her right leg leans a lion, and against her left the above giant. The images of Lukshmee, Suruswuttee, Kartikeyhu, and Guneshu, are very frequently made and placed by the side of this goddess.\* The two first of these, we are informed by the natives, are the daughters, and the two last the sons of Doorga, one of whom is represented with the head of an elephant and a human body; the other, whom they generally contrive to make of pretty regular and engaging features, mounted on a peacock equipped with a bow and arrow. Before this amiable group of personages, are laid heaps of rice, flowers, and different kinds of fruits, as offerings—Doorga, we are told, is an allegorical representation of

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\* Ward on the Literature, &c. of the Hindoos.



virtue in combat with vice—the giant or monster, and if her numerous arms, are intended to signify her great agility in detecting and discomfiting the stratagems of her enemies, and power of punishing them, the similitude is at once *happy and striking* ! Virtue certainly is an active principle ; but it loves peace more than warfare ; and it not unfrequently happens, that virtuous men of all others, are the most unsuspecting and the most apt to be deceived and entangled in the snares of the vicious.

The Doorga pooja is celebrated by the poorer class of Hindoos with vocal music consisting of songs, both divine and profane composed annually for the occasion by professional men, who entertain bands of singers for the purpose—Two of these are engaged to sing during three nights of the Pooja. The sacred songs are composed in honour of the Hindoo deities. The amorous and other description of songs are chiefly of a sentimental and tender kind ; but those which are most esteemed by the natives are, what are styled by them, *Cobees* ( not cabbages ) which are so disgustingly obscene and vulgar that they would shock the ears of any but a native to hear them. 'I would,' observes Mr. Ward, 'have given in this place, a specimen of the songs sung before the image, but found them so full of broad obscenity that I could not copy a single line. All those actions which a sense of decency keeps out of the most indecent English songs, are here detailed, sung, and laughed at, without the least sense of shame. A poor ballad singer in England would be sent to the house of correction, and flogged, for performing the *meritorious actions* of these wretched idolaters.'

The origin of these songs is not a little singular. We are told, that in days of yore when Gods and Goddesses mingled in social converse with mankind, it once happened, that the goddess Doorga, took umbrage at something or another, ( which, we are sorry, escapes our recollection just now, as we are sure our readers would like to be informed of every particular connected with this curious piece of information, ) and threatened to punish the offence which had excited her

severe displeasure by bringing some woeful disaster upon her votaries. In order to expiate the sin and appease her wrath numerous costly offerings and sacrifices were made but without effect ; till, at length wearied with repeated exertions to please the angry Goddess, one of the officiating priests started up, and, throwing himself into an indecorous attitude, showered a volley of abuses upon the offended deity, who strange as it may appear, we are informed, and no doubt it is true, was so gratified with this novel mode of propitiating her, that she expressed her approbation of it, by relaxing the rigidity of her muscles and putting on a placid smile. In commemoration, therefore, of this singular occurrence, ever since, it is related, the practice of singing these songs, among others, has been regularly observed at this festival in particular. The parties engaged to sing songs of this description exert their powers and talents, not with a view to excel in the elegance and harmony of vocal performance but to surpass each other in disgusting obscenity of language, and abuse, in which they are encouraged by success being rewarded in a munificent manner.

Having quoted Mr. Ward in confirmation of one of our statements, we shall next be permitted to correct a slight error of his :—he says on the occasion at which he was present, that there were 'in the area groups of *Hindoo* dancing woman, finely dressed, singing, and dancing with sleepy steps, surrounded with Europeans who were sitting on chairs and couches.' We fancy they were not Hindoo, but Musulmeen woman, some of whom come down from Lucknow and other provinces of the Mogul Empire, annually, others are residents of Calcutta and its vicinity.

To a close and experienced observer of Indian life, nothing can be more obvious, than the fact that they have greatly degenerated from the character which they originally bore. That simplicity and mildness once the so peculiar features of it, now no longer distinguish it ; and if any thing at all remains of them, they are always found allied to a feeling of habitual cowardice, deceit and treachery. They put on the garb of

gentleness only with a view to subserve their nefarious purposes. To their superiors they are exceedingly mean and cringing ; to their inferiors as arrogant and contemptuous. Those who are in the habit of attending the Doorga pooja nautches cannot but have witnessed this difference in their conduct towards the two classes, which divide their community—the richer and the poorer. The debasing and demoralizing effects of idolatry have been strikingly displayed wherever it has obtained votaries and worshippers. The horrid obscenities practiced by the adorers of Bacchus and Cybele, at their festivals, both in words and actions, are not less notorious than those which we have detailed above ; but the causes of the degeneracy of the Hindoo character, in the particulars we have mentioned, would appear to be independent of this circumstance, and we are constrained to avow our conviction, that it has in a great measure resulted from the highly objectionable conduct of christians resorting to these idle and mischievous exhibitions. Aware of the moral and intellectual superiority of their conquerors, the native gentry feel proud of their company, and as they have very little discrimination of character, they extend their hospitality ( which, by the way, is rather of an equivocal nature ) to all classes of Europeans, without the slightest regard to any difference that might exist in their ranks and habits. Thus we often notice at these nautches a ludicrous assemblage of people—Colonels and Majors are seen promenading the sometimes no less ludicrously but splendidly decorated halls, already occupied by the privates of their regiments ; where Bailiffs and scavengers enjoy the festive entertainments of the evening, in company, if not in sympathy, with Civilians of almost all gradations. From this promiscuous group of 'white men,' their dingy and servile entertainers acquire no little degree of self-conceit and self-importance, —qualities which are frequently developed in the course of their assumed characters as *mine hosts*. In this ill-maintained capacity, they look down with contempt, not only upon such christian gentlemen, as are emphatically distinguished as *men of colour*,

but indiscriminately upon the humble yet respectable classes of their own countrymen. They have, in this manner, acquired all the vices peculiar to the European vulgar, without having enriched themselves with any of the virtues peculiar to Europeans in general. Their love of ostentation and finery increases in proportion to the admiration and suffrage they obtain from their white patrons ; and so long as Europeans continue to dignify with their presence the unhallowed temples of mirth thrown open to them during the celebration of their idolatrous rites, so long, we are persuaded, will the labours of benevolent and useful societies be ineffectual in their attempts to promote their praise-worthy objects.

The reproach which attaches to Christians for visiting the idolatrous festivities of the natives, derives additional force from the circumstance of some of them indulging even to excess in dissipation. At some of the houses supper is provided, together with all sorts of wines, though certainly not of an unexceptionable quality. If the persons alluded to were moderate in the enjoyment of the luxuries of the table, less blame would be found ; but unfortunately a too free indulgence of the luscious grape has frequently led to the most disgusting scenes, calculated in no small degree to lower our character in the opinion of the natives. It has been frequently remarked that if the wealthy natives, who give these annual entertainments, were to be more select in their invitations, no scandalous proceedings would take place ; but we shall go a step further, and say, that instead of soliciting the European community to visit these entertainments, they ought to confine them exclusively to their own countrymen, who must be far more interested in them than foreigners.

It is remarkable, that naturally niggardly and parsimonious as the natives are in their habits, they are nevertheless extremely fond of show on the occasions of which we are speaking, and others. 'In the city of Calcutta alone,' observes Mr. Ward, 'it is supposed, upon a moderate calculation, that half a million sterling is expended annually on this festival (Doorga pooja.) About fifty years ago Kundurpu-gooru, a Kaisthu,



expended in this worship 3,800 pounds, and spent 12,500 pounds annually as long as he lived in the same manner.' In a shraddha which took place at Serampore, in 1825, about 50,000 Rupees is said to have been incurred in the celebration of it, and in another which took place shortly after, double that sum \* ! We would here request permission to make one suggestion ; might not these vast sums of money which are literally thrown away every year, be devoted to much better purposes ? Might not the schools established for the education of native children of both sexes, be supported with a part of them, instead of *our* being saddled with their charge, since *they* only reap the benefit ?

We would not be understood insinuate, in what we have said respecting the parsimonious conduct of the natives, that no native of wealth has ever come forward with his assistance in times of necessity ; but instances of this kind are rare, and when they do occur, it is to be very much feared, that they who contribute to the alleviation of public calamity are not so much actuated by feelings of disinterested benevolence and humanity as by motives of ostentation and vanity, coupled with a desire of being thought to imitate, if not to rival, the example of their conquerors.

M. T.

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\* See Friend of India Quarterly Series, No. 9.



## REMARKS ON THE CONDITION OF EAST INDIANS

IT is gratifying to observe the attention which the case of the East Indians has lately attracted. Besides the editors of almost all the periodicals, diurnal and otherwise, of Calcutta and its dependent Presidencies, several of their own community have laid them under peculiar obligations by having stepped forward to advocate their cause, and by pointing out to them various means of ameliorating their present unhappy condition.

To mention names is unnecessary : every one knows them and appreciates their worth, and their names will live long upon the earth after their bodies are laid in their graves. The amount of the good which they have been able to effect by their laudable efforts, is perhaps difficult to ascertain with precision. They have no doubt stirred up the feelings of their countrymen, and made them more alive to their own permanent interest—an impression has been made in the minds of East Indians, that they ought to exert themselves more to better their own condition, and that many means, quite within their reach, if availed by them, would tend to this very desirable end.

I am very much mistaken, however, if imagination has not a little too much magnified the real wretchedness of our condition, and made us look tenfold more miserable than we are ; more like caricatures in painting than tangible beings with flesh and blood, inhabiting terra-firma. We have had every thing ascribed to us, but the wit of knowing our own real state ; and this will ever be the case when things are viewed through the medium of imagination, and not sober judgment, and a mistaken apprehension of our case, thus obtained, will as naturally lead to the adoption of means for its amelioration unsuited to it. I have been told that the petition which is now on its way to Parliament contains complaints of grievances several of which are altogether

imaginary, when it should have been throughout a cool and industrious collection of facts from every existing source, carefully and luminously arranged. A petition thus prepared and presented to that august and enlightened assembly, if it did not produce the effects intended, would at least give them an honourable notion of the East Indians. It is very likely such a process and method have not been pursued in the present case. Busy imagination it is to be feared has had too much share in the merits of the preparation ; and I hope, therefore, it will not have less in the disgrace of a failure should it unfortunately so turn out.

But here is a poor timid soul ! to forebode evils to us. I allude to S. I. who has published a piece in the 2d No. of this work entitled 'considerations on the Colonization of India by Europeans.' He discusses the subject under four heads or questions all some way, if not directly, connected with the main point, but very superficially treated a—natural consequence of discussing subjects within short limits in many points of view. The questions alluded to are these, First, Will colonisation endanger the British rule ? Second, Will it be beneficial or otherwise to the natives in general ? Third, Will it affect the Indo-Britons and in what manner ? and Fourth, Will it prove the cause of the introduction of the arts and sciences of Europe throughout the empire ?

To notice his remarks on all these points would be impossible without either being superficial, or extending my limits, for neither of which have I any inclination, nor do I intend to do it. The remarks I shall make will bear on the conclusion only, in its relation to East Indians, whose case it is asserted by S. I., will be materially affected for the worse if the colonisation of India by Europeans be permitted without any alteration in the present system of Indian policy, by admitting them as well as the natives, as far as practicable, into a participation of the privileges, exclusively, enjoyed by Europeans.

I will not say, that it is *impolitic* to deny a numerous, growing, and tolerably enlightened people their rights as

natural subjects of the British Government, and without any fault of their own ; but that it is just, no person of an unprejudiced mind, I presume, will venture to affirm without hesitating. How far the dictates of sound policy may overrule and set aside the rights of justice, is a question, I do not feel myself competent to decide. The sufferers no doubt wish it to be proved that in no case ought it to be so, but they should remember, that their wishes cannot unfortunately be made the criteria of adjusting this nice point—a hasty conclusion in which would be highly unjustifiable.

It has often been urged, that the East Indians are not qualified to use the privileges they aspire after. This is true in some measure, but not altogether ; and even if it were altogether true, it would not be any fault of theirs. Those who at present enjoy those immunities exclusively do not qualify themselves but are partly qualified by Government of them, which has not been the favoured lot of the East Indians to experience—a pretty sure evidence that Government has no present intention of granting the boon to them. That the Europeans in general have better natural abilities to a certain extent than the East Indians may be conceded without prejudice to them ; but that the inferiority of East Indians in this respect is not capable of improvement to an equal extent cannot be allowed. Those who are aware of the influence of certain and desirable prospects, prospects of magnitude, upon the mind, will easily conceive, how natural it is, that the East Indians in general do not present fairer specimens of talent than they have hitherto done. Bounded prospects, by a natural process, produce bounded energies and faculties. Let the scope be enlarged, let the prospects be made desirable, more certain, and the mind will be seen to accommodate itself to them.

It has not hitherto been made the interests of East Indian parents to procure their children the best education in their power. They have therefore looked upon every suggestion of the kind to them as advice to throw away money ; for they have not been able to conceive the propriety of educating

their children thus finely for copyists—no great motive this surely to a parent to expend money which would come to much better use to his child after his death. But for once let a sufficient motive be presented to them; let the prospect of their children be enlarged, and I will pledge myself that they would not hesitate another moment to get their children educated in the best manner possible, and that the East Indians would soon be found qualified to fill with credit any situation in this country.

But the sophistry of the argument lies in confounding the different degrees of qualification necessary for the enjoyment of the different privileges which they are denied. It cannot be believed that an equal degree of abilities and acquirements are requisite to make a civilian and a soldier, a physician and a barrister; it cannot, therefore, be admitted that the East Indian is equally unfit for all these. Then why not throw open to them those of these services for which they *are* qualified, at least, for which they could most easily qualify themselves? 'However little danger,' says an intelligent writer, 'present or future, we have to apprehend from the Eurasians, it is our duty to treat them with fairness and justice.' But is it treating them justly to withhold from them what, if they have not a just title to, no man in the world has? A right can be forfeited only by misconduct or inability to use it properly. The East Indians have done nothing wrong—they have not abused the right, because they never enjoyed it—to deserve to forfeit it; and as to their inability they would engage to remove it if a promise of the enjoyment of their rights be held out to them. The same writer justly remarks, 'at present they are rigidly excluded from all offices of *trust*, civil or military. From civil offices, indeed, their exclusion is complete; and their highest promotion in the military service is the dignity of a serjeant or drum-major. Their exclusion from trust in the country of their birth, is unjust, ungenerous, and impolitic. They cannot, indeed, overthrow our dominion, however we may maltreat them; but a presence of a mass of discontented persons, as they



must necessarily be, cannot but contribute more or less to its insecurity.'

Those who regarded most the policy of the present system, overlooking the injustice of the case, should reflect on the probable consequences of nourishing in the very heart of the country a discontented, disaffected people as they must soon become, if, as their numbers increase, Government do not keep them employed, and thus keep their chagrin and thoughts from brooding over foolish projects. History ought to have taught us that discontented people cannot be trusted for a moment, and though from the insignificance of their number it might be easy to crush them in their attempt at rebellion ; yet such an event, should it ever take place though it were even a hundred years hence, would prove very unpropitious to the security of the Government under which they live, by giving notice to the surrounding hostile powers of the unfortunate or what will then perhaps be termed, of the 'untoward' circumstance.

This very system of favouritism, of monopoly, was tried in New Spain and the consequence has been just as might have been expected ; not solely from it, but in conjunction with other causes induced by its unfriendly operation New Spain is no longer New Spain ; but Bolivia—the viceroyalty of the former has given place to the commonwealth of the latter. Of the several classes, the *Chapitones*, the *Creoles*, the *Mulattoes* and *Mestizos*, the *Negros*, and the *Indians*, which composed its population, we are informed that almost all the offices of trust and power were *exclusively* filled up by the *Chapitones*. 'From the jealous attention of the Spanish court,' says that admired historian, Robertson, 'to secure the dependence of the colonies on the parent state, *all departments of consequence are filled by persons sent from Europe* ; and in order to prevent any dubious fidelity from being employed, each must bring proof of a clear descent from a family of old Christians, untainted with any mixture of any Jewish or Mahomedan blood, and never disgraced by any censure of the Inquisition.'



That such a system should be fruitful of jealousy among its subjects is no matter of wonder ; that jealousy should breed discontent, and discontent disaffection and all lead to rebellion and independence from a disagreeable yoke, cannot be surprising. The wonder is, that the consequence of it is not more easily foreseen. Every system of monopoly carries in itself the seeds of its own destruction, and sooner or later it is proved to be really so. The following remarks of Sir John Malcolm regarding East Indians will be read with satisfaction by every unprejudiced mind.

'The half-castes (as they are generally termed,) or children of Europeans by native women, form a considerable class of British subjects in India, who certainly merit more of the attention of Government, than they have hitherto received. They may be considered a distinct class ; and one which is gradually rising into importance, from its increasing numbers. They have not the robust frame of their fathers ; but they are in general equal, if not superior, in strength to the natives of those parts of India where they are born. They are remarkable for their docility and intelligence ; and only require the care of the state, to become valuable subjects. This race are at present considered as inferior to the European part of the community, and do not enjoy that consideration, to which their qualities are often entitled, from the natives. Yet, under these circumstances of depression and discouragement, they lose few opportunities of making themselves useful and respectable in the various walks of life to which their pursuit is directed ; and all the seminaries which have been founded for their education and improvement, have fully succeed. This class have in short been found from all the experiments yet made to possess a disposition and talents suited to all the occupations of civil life : and there can be no doubt that under a proper system of encouragement they might be employed in our army. They would form a distinct corps on whose fidelity and attachment every reliance might be placed ; and if military feelings and habits were early inculcated there can be no ground to conclude that they would prove deficient in

courage or hardihood. As it is impossible to adopt any measures which will prevent the rapaid increase of this part of the population of our Indian territories, it becomes our duty to try every means of rendering them useful. They are a distinct, but that is no cause why they should be a depressed, class in community : and it appears both humane and politic to take every step which will raise them in their own estimation, and that of others. We should cultivate their moral and religious principles ; and while we institute and encourage seminaries for their instruction upon an extended scale, we should provide the means for their future employment in the conditions of life best suited to their respective situations and qualifications.'

We want no more as the beginning and pledge of further promotions ; and such being the uniform language of enlightened and unprejudiced men, I leave it to, produce its own effects on the minds of liberal and considerate readers.

But supposing this desirable change in the Indian Policy were not to take place for a long long time to come and colonization were permitted, I cannot see how it follows, that the condition of East Indians would be, materially affected for the worse. Indeed the apprehensions of S.I. are founded on the most frivolous of all conceivable reasons. 'It will I believe,' he observes, 'be admitted, that our race, will be particularly affected by the measure — and I regret to think we may be reduced to the same, if not *a worse* condition than the Hindoos or Mussalmans. If we anticipate the future by a reflection on the present prospects of our race what can we expect from the colonization of Europeans, but a state of far greater degradation than we suffer ? Holding the natives in perfect contempt, would they treat us better than them ? Surely not ?' Such are his fearful anticipations from a measure ardently wished for by many and foreboding' by its advocates of certain good to all classes of the Indian population.

There is no evidence whatever for asserting that the natives are treated with contempt by the Europeans. It appears to me very questionable whether the natives are treated with

anything even approaching to contempt, but which part of the natives is it intended ? I presume those in Calcutta and its immediate vicinity ; but are these really treated with contempt, or is there not reason to fear that S.I. has been deceived with the appearance of something merely resembling it ?

The constitution of the British Indian Community, it has been often remarked, is a very peculiar one. The natives separated among themselves by castes are still more so from Europeans and East Indians by a variety of unavoidable circumstances, which at once forbid all present expectation of a familiar coalition between them, nor is this necessary for the purposes of common life. It is not necessary that the distinctions created by the necessities of the case, should be destroyed to bring about this coalition where no adequate advantage would result from it. It is this distance from each other and the consequent novel and unattracting aspect presented which is generally mistaken for unnecessary reserve and symptoms of a contemptuous and supercilious treatment of the inferiors by the superiors ; but it is easy to perceive that it is not the want of good will or respect but the absence of the necessary links of the chain of the Indian Community that has given the occasion for the complaint. Let these be supplied, and all will appear just as it should. Every symptom of what is complained will vanish at once. As the best proofs that the natives of Calcutta are not treated with contempt by Europeans, we may mention that many of them are employed by them and great numbers liberally contribute to their improvement.

The European authorities in the Mofussil, I can speak with certainty, are generally very well disposed towards their native subjects, and the only wish regarding them, which, I am sure, they cherish, is that they may be improved. Many of them have had songs composed to their honour which are sung to this day. It is never from their European authorities, that the natives have any cause of complaint ; it is from their own landlords and the public native officers, that they receive

most occasion for complaint. This, however, instead of making against colonization, makes for it, inasmuch as it shows the necessity of substituting more principled and better disposed men in their places. The native Zumeendar is either too lazy, or thinks himself too great a man to work ; he has therefore several in his employ, called his *Gomashtuhs* to manage his estates for him ; collect the revenues, &c. These men are paid little, but being thoroughly well practised in all the ways of extortion, are never at a loss how to make up the deficiency in their purse. They raise for the Zumeendar the necessary supplies for the celebration of the different expensive festivals and ceremonies which custom and superstition have imposed upon him ; but it being raised from among the poor ryotts, they are in the end the only sufferers. Now it may be well supposed that in the Christian Zumeendars the ryotts would find more humane and honest men who would be under none or few temptations to oppress them. This would naturally make them industrious and improve the country greatly.

The native public officers employed in the zillah courts are no better, notwithstanding the most careful and vigilant superintendence of their European superiors. Not one of them will put his pen to paper if you have a business to be transacted, and are obliged to go to him, without a fee, the consequence of not giving which, to the poor, is delay, and the desolation of his cultivations, the only source of support. This detail of facts might be considerably enlarged to show that the places of the principal natives would be better supplied by Europeans ; but it is time to inquire, how it follows that because the natives are treated with contempt, therefore the East Indians will be treated so.

The bare statement is enough to expose its absurdity, and it is difficult to believe how such a strange conceit (for argument it is not) could enter the mind of any man, and still more, that he should in his senses, seriously maintain it. In this conceit the East Indians are regarded in the same light as the natives, at least, they are insinuated to be locked upon



by the Europeans as the same, as deserving of the same treatment—an honour this, for which I imagine we are entirely indebted to S.I. It is not avowed, but it must be inferred, that it is also intended to be insinuated, that the East Indians are treated with contempt. I should hope this is not the case ; at least such an insinuation ought never to be made without positive proof. The complaint, if we look again into the peculiar construction of the British Indian Community, will be found to be imaginary. It is that very appearance of distance and reserve which has in this instance also deceived S. I. The natives in their situation in Calcutta might with equal propriety complain of contemptuous treatment from East Indians, for there is as little familiar intercourse, as little exchange of courtesy between them, as there is between East Indians and Europeans, and this, as I have already hinted, is, in some measure an unavoidable circumstance, and will continue so until either the East Indians are raised to the rank of the covenanted servants of the Honorable Company, or colonization is permitted. This latter measure would in itself greatly remedy the state of things complained of, by making those broad and palpable distinctions merge more into each other by the diffusion of some intermediate classes of Europeans among them. If great Britain were deprived of its different classes of people except the very highest and the lowest, and in the room of those drained a great part of the East Indians, or a number of natives were substituted, it would present nearly the same sight as the Indian society presents in the absence of some intermediate classes of people,—the nature of the intercourse of its inhabitants would be changed ; the same broad and palpable differences would be observable, because that which maintained a community of feelings between one class and another—a gradual rise of ranks from the lowest to the highest, no longer existed.

The case is somewhat different with the East Indian in the Mofussil. There, let the reader be assured, he has no room to complain of the sacrifice of feelings unless it is on account



of his own fault. If he tries to maintain an unblameable conduct, he is treated with peculiar marks of respect from his European superiors, who are generally speaking, generous and affable towards their inferiors, I am acquainted with instances of affability, and condescension in Europeans which speak a thousand volumes in their favour. And all this is easily accounted for also. The European too on his part has no sacrifice to make, which is not the case with him when placed in Calcutta. There the state of things prescribe to him a different line of conduct which he feels it both his interest and duty to follow.

After all, there is no reason whatever to believe, that a diffusion of a limited number of Europeans of different classes over such parts of India as are most eligible for colonization, would be followed by the consequences dreaded by S. I. It might have the contrary effect—at least I do not see why we should trouble ourselves with the fearful forebodings of a timid soul, who may after all have been dreaming of a prodigious number of ships laden with things which he mistook for the yahoos he so much dreads, and it was right in him to give the alarm, until he could convince himself that it was all a chimera or fantasy.

*200 Miles from Calcutta.*

[ No. 5 ; December, 1829 ]

## CULTIVATION OF HINDOOSTHAN

ASIA has been estimated to contain eleven million square-miles of habitable space, and its inhabitants, exclusive, we must suppose, of foreigners, at forty-six to each of those miles. If we compare this with the case of the other quarters of the globe, we shall see reason to admit that it is well populated : and yet no person can have travelled over the smallest portion of Hindoosthan, in any part of it, without being forced to lament its wretched state.

Whatever tendency the permanent settlement of Lord Cornwallis might have to a spirited and large improvement of the country, it is certain, that but a small part of his golden prospects has as yet been realized. 'Wealth and happiness,' were the sum of those prospects, but little of these is visible any where. Those who have never stepped beyond the precincts of Calcutta can have but a very inadequate idea of the real poverty and ignorance of the natives ; and if the happiness contemplated to be communicated by the financial and judicial arrangements, adopted by his Lordship, consists in leaving their subjects in the most woful state of ignorance and poverty, the natives may be allowed to be happy ; but that this can be the case we have yet to learn.

No part of Hindoosthan is unsusceptible of improvement ; and improvement to an extent which even unfettered imagination itself may be allowed to paint to the utmost height of its soarings. Vast tracts of country lie almost waste and uninhabited ; others, not less in extent, covered over with impenetrable forests, the hideous den of all descriptions of beasts and reptiles. Witness the regions lying between Behar and Bengal and even as far as Nagpoor ; witness also those that are called the Soondurbunds, which, till very lately, had not been marked with the footsteps of man.

No part of Hindoosthan appears more to require improvement than its lower and more eastern provinces. Subject

during several months of the year to an inundation in a considerable degree unfriendly to their thorough and extensive cultivation, the fewness, the indolence, the ignorance, and the poverty of their inhabitants, the defective system of management among themselves, the oppressive measures under which the cultivating classes labour from their Zumeendars, the Gomashtas of the latter, the Daroga and his retinue — all combined together seem to forbid any expectation of improvement before material changes take place in the entire system.

The country, in many places low in itself, by being overflowed to a considerable height with water, is prevented from being cultivated with many things which its soil would otherwise admit. In such places, almost the only thing which is now reared, is paddy, and of that only one crop ; and, indeed, it must be owned, that without some money and trouble being expended on them, more they could not be made to yield. The former, the natives are too poor to afford ; the latter, they are too lazy to bestow. It would not be impossible to rescue, in time, many parts from this diluvian state ; but such a task must not be hoped for from the barren ingenuity and nerveless spirit of the natives.

A large portion of the north and south eastern parts of Hindoosthan, is nearly one entire sheet of water poured down, from the high ranges of mountains which intersect them, during the rains. To a person voyaging through them at this season of the year, the most miserable spectacles are presented. When he surveys the waters under and around him to the depth sometimes of twenty feet and more, and remembers that he is passing over what in other months of the year is dry land, he must be astonished at its amazing quantity, and at a loss to imagine how land subject to such a misfortune, can ever be either properly inhabited or improved ; but what strikes him as a still greater object of painful reflections, is the half, if not the almost immersed state of the habitations of the natives, though built on considerably raised spots.

When the waters have nearly subsided, the natives

cultivate these lands here and there with the crop of paddy already mentioned, and having snatched that, fly from the face of the approaching giant of desolation to such neighbouring places as are not subject to it, leaving their miserable huts to perish in the wreck. This necessitates them to erect them annually ; but notwithstanding all this, who will not be surprised to hear, that many of them prefer taking up such lands rather than others better conditioned, because they are to be had cheapest, and are, for the most part, easily made to yield the solitary crop which they are content to reap ?

The unhappy effects of this strange turn of mind is indeed every where strikingly manifest. It would astonish any body to learn, that almost the only culinary vegetables that are brought to the markets of these parts, are *byguns* and *kutchos*. Now if these things can be reared, there is no reason to believe, why other vegetables, more palatable than these, might not be reared too. Very few things, indeed, besides these and curry-stuffs, such as chillies, onions, &c. are cultivated even in those parts which are either not at all, or but very partially subject to inundation. Many of them after the subsultory manner of the veriest barbarian, will not cultivate the same portion of land any two years together, and that not because they conceive the yielding powers of it to be exhausted, but because on the *russudee-jumma*, they are not obliged to pay any revenue for the first year of their cultivations. They take up either such lands as have never been cultivated before, or such as have been deserted for the very same reason, by some previous occupant ; because the terms on which such lands are generally obtainable exempt the renter from payment of any cess for the first year, and require them to pay only an anna for the next, increasing at the rate of half an anna or a little more, for the two or three succeeding years, when the usual jumma of ground brought under, what they consider, thorough cultivation, is fixed, and remains unchanged for the future. Ignorant of the methods of improving lands, almost before the first year is closed they are not to be found there ; most frequently however they take up double

or treble the quantity of land they are able to cultivate in the year, and cultivate them in two or three portions as the extent may be, for two or three succeeding years, and thus avoid the payment of the whole until a second time brought under cultivation.

It is difficult to assign any reason for this conduct, because, if I mistake not, a land is always easier of cultivation the second year than the first ; and if enriched with manure must certainly become more fruitful. Though, therefore, they have to pay nothing on their present plan, they are not, in the end, gainers by it ; at least, so long as such a system continues in operation, little improvement of the country can be expected.

The unfortunate proprietors of lands thus circumstanced are obliged to submit to these chicaneries, and to let every fresh applicant have them on the same terms, or they will not know how to find the *sudur juma*, when they are to pay the Government demand. Owing to this a great number of estates are annually brought to the hammer, and tossed about year after year, from one hand to another.

It is well known, that the Zumeendars, if he is not himself both proprietor and cultivator, is one of the most lazy folks in the world. That he feels little or no interest in the improvement of his estate, is from nothing more certain than from the little personal inspection he bestows upon it. Many of them know no more of the real condition of their lands than they know of 'the man in the moon', and are often simpleton enough to swallow down whatever their managers say. I have heard it related of some of them, that they have been persuaded to believe by the latter that 5 *kahons* of course are more than 5 *rupees* ! These managing knaves, always true and alive to their own interests, will often rent out their master's property on the most disadvantageous terms if handsomely bribed. Of their cruelties towards the ryuts little needs to be said, as they are pretty generally known. They never give a receipt to any of the ryuts without receiving something,



nor ever visit them without expecting something. Far removed from observation, they seldom fail to enrich themselves by every means, 'foul or fair,' in their power, at the expense of their thoughtless masters and their wretched tenants; and soon, becoming infinitely richer than the former, leave them to finish their loathed existence in the miserable dungeons of their district cities.

To add to these grievances, there is Master Daroga with his motley retinue of *mohurrurs*, *jumadars*, *burkundazes* &c. &c., who makes no ceremony to take them up as *begarees* on every call he receives accompanied with *bukhsheesh* from shooting, hunting, and other pleasure parties. It is true, they do not always go unpaid; but who would not willingly resign payment earned with such hardships, to enjoy his home peaceably? They are, however, often very inadequately paid, and sometimes go without any remuneration at all. What remains, therefore, but by flight to escape such merciless clutches, and leave the Zumeendar to supply his place as well as he can, or let his lands run to jungle, which is the more frequent case of the two.

From these cruelties, if we except that of a court of justice *apparently* open to all, but to the cultivating class most difficult of all access, they *really* enjoy no protection whatever. The Zumeendar, if on the spot, is least of all capable of affording it to them; if absent, it is a wonder if he ever hears of these distressing proceedings. The ryot dare not go to court without coolly determining to ruin himself. For, where is he to find the expenses of the prosecution? If he does go there, he seldom returns without that most pleasant satisfaction of having become a greater beggar than he was before he went; he therefore actually betakes himself to that life, and thus adds to the number of those hundreds who fill the streets of every city in the country with their cries.

CURSORY REMARKS  
ON  
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN INDIA

THAT the Company's rule in these countries has contributed to the happiness of the people, there can be no question. Many persons think of deciding such a question by an appeal to the natives, whose answers they persuade themselves ought to be decisive on the point. It cannot be disguised that a reference to this quarter, will obtain no favourable opinion to British supremacy ; and this, so far from exciting surprise, ought to be considered most natural. The British will ever be considered by the natives in the light of intruders ; and this feeling will naturally regulate their opinion on this subject. The well informed amongst the natives will be most reluctant to give a preference to the existing rule, over that which formerly swayed the natives of India, because such an opinion would at once imply their great inferiority to their present rulers, and their incapacity to govern their affairs. National vanity is as deceiving in its nature as personal vanity ; and it would be found the most difficult thing in the world to bring a whole nation to confess their inferiority to their neighbours. This is an observation founded, not only on the principles of our common nature, but also on the experience of facts ; for observe how the Englishman thinks no race of men better than that to which he belongs ; how the gay Frenchman despises the sobriety of the German ; and how the Chinese considers the rest of the world no better than barbarians.

Inquire again amongst the poorer classes, and the result will be, that the general feeling is against their rulers. But of what weight is such an opinion ? It will be well to ascertain. The grossest ignorance envelopes the minds of the

natives at large ; and it is not possible for them to form any opinion deduced from a knowledge of past events. Neither does any thing like traditional knowledge exist amongst them. They know nothing of the history of the past ; they have never heard of the desolating wars which prevailed under their former rulers ; they have no idea of the principles on which the former Governments were founded. And yet a knowledge of such things is absolutely necessary to form an opinion on the comparative merits of the two Governments. It may be well doubted, whether the well informed amongst the natives can bring such requisite qualifications to the consideration of this question. How much less, then, are the lower classes capable of coming to a right opinion on the subject.

But after all, the fact is, that the ill-opinion of the British Government, which is entertained by those who are capable of forming an opinion on the subject, is founded on a feeling of pride—and nothing else. The higher classes, and the better informed part of the natives, think themselves slighted, when they observe the dignified offices of the state filled by foreigners, and find that they are excluded from all share in the Government. Under the present state of things, they are led to think that their 'occupation's gone,' and that those distinctions and honours which awaited them as the rewards of their zeal and labour in the public service, under their own Government, are now reserved for their European masters.

No saying is truer than that which was uttered by that venerable nobleman, who so ably conducted the affairs of this country, that our hold on the empire was opinion, and we repeat the saying. It is not on opinion of fear, that we have resources by means of which we would encounter any opposition, that we have a standing army, which would crush any foe ; it is not such an opinion, to which the British Government owes its stability. It is the good opinion which is entertained for the Government ; it is the reliance which is placed on their good intentions, and it is the bright contrast which our Government affords on a comparison with the

governments of the native princes. It would be too much to argue that an army of 200,000 men was capable of keeping a population of 80 or 90 millions of men in complete subjection. It would be impossible to expect that such an army could prevent tumults and revolts ; and it is incredible that a whole nation, in a state of dissatisfaction with its government, could be brought to that degree of tractability, as not to give indications of its dissatisfaction. Discontent would surely be evinced in some way or other—either in a popular commotion in some distant province of the empire, or in the attempt of some daring chieftains to subvert constituted authority. The fire cannot for ever be in one state, but must either be extinguished for want of fuel, or be kindled into a flame by latent causes.

But, it may be asked, had not the native princes their armies ? And had these the effect of producing the quiet and subordination which the British rule has secured. No ! not a year elapsed without tumults and insurrections in every part of the empire. Mill says of Akbar, the wisest and best of the Mogul princes, 'that notwithstanding the virtues of Akbar's administration, the spirit of rebellion inherent in the principles of Indian despotism, left him hardly a moment's tranquillity, during the whole course of a long and prosperous reign.' If this be said of Akbar—of him whose wisdom, humanity, and valour, pass for proverbs in Hindoostan, what may be said of those who can never stand a comparison with him, in respect to his superior qualifications for governments. Let history furnish a reply.

But it may be said, that the troops of the native princes were not so well disciplined a body as those of the British Government ; and that the former Governments had not such effectual instruments for repressing intestine disorders as the present government possesses. The force of this argument is not great ; because, unless it imply that the native troops were wholly useless in such emergencies, it means nothing. A giant's strength is not necessary to crush an insect. But allowing the force of the argument, that the English govern-

ment, from the superior discipline of its troops, is better capable of keeping its subjects in awe than were the native governments, with troops greatly inferior in point of discipline; may it not be asked, whether the circumstance of the English, being intruders, and who cannot be expected to have such claims on the good will and loyal dispositions of its subjects as the native Governments, ought to have no weight in the discussion ? Say that the British have an efficient army which the natives had not ; but, at the same time, let it be remembered, that the British are intruders, and must ever be considered as such—that the native princes had this advantage, that they could not be regarded as having no right to the allegiance of their subjects, but on the contrary must always have been looked up to as the natural lords of the soil. The advantage just mentioned must surely be considered as far greater than that of possessing an efficient army : the one has moral strength on its side, the other implies brute force ; and yet this decided advantage which the native Governments, possessed over the British, availed them nothing.

The natives are too well aware, that, under British supremacy, India has enjoyed a repose to which she was an utter stranger in former periods : they now see a permanency in the existing state of things : there is not now a probability of retiring to rest the subject of one prince, and rising the next morning the subject of another : there are no rival Omras now to contend for supremacy ; and during the contention, to involve the country in confusion and dismay, and make it one scene of devastation and bloodshed. These things do not now exist : they have been chased away, like the spectre forms of night, by the dawn of that morning which has introduced British supremacy into these lands. The mechanic, the merchant, the landholder, may now be sure that the hand of lawless rapine will not arrest him in his peaceful occupations, and deprive him of his honest gains. Their conviction of the security of the British Government is too strong, to allow them to indulge in such idle fears.

Of these truths the natives are fully aware ; and they will



even acknowledge the correctness of the above statement. Yet this acquiescence on their part is taken for nothing ; while, in fact, it ought to be received as the strongest testimony in favour of the British Government. The natives may feel dissatisfied that they are not admitted to a share in the government — this is a natural and laudable feeling ; but they are also satisfied that the present is by far the best government that has as yet ruled the destinies of India.

Shah Jehan in the decline of life was found incapacitated to hold the reins of government, and Dara his eldest son, assumed the office of regent. No sooner was this step taken than the other three brothers, Suja, Aurungzebe, and Morad, flew to arms, each vying with the other to gain the ascendancy. The reader of history needs not to be here informed, that Aurungzebe succeeded in ascending the throne of the Moguls, after wading thro' fields of human blood. This picture, though startling in itself, might still be allowed to pass by unheeded, if it were the only bloody scene acted in former days ; but the case was otherwise. Every accession to the throne, was invariably the occasion of fresh effusion of blood ; and the successful aspirant ascended the *musnud* by the heaps of bodies left on the field of battle.

Such a state of things, so prolific in evils, does not now exist ; and to British supremacy are the natives of India indebted for preservation from such direful calamities.

Under the native governments, another evil existed, which has fled before the genius of British rule. Every now and then, successful adventurers started forth, whose object was plunder and rapine, and whose path was indicated by the desolation and ravage he had committed. Two of the most remarkable men, of whom the pages of Indian history make mention, rose to the highest eminence in this way. The founder of the Mahratta confederacy was Sevajee, the son of a Zemindar, and who commenced his career as a Bandit. Hyder Ali, of whom the historian of British India says, that he proved the most formidable enemy that the English had ever encountered in India, was the son of a common foot-soldier in the

Carnatic, and, in course of time, through craft and violence, supplanted his sovereign on the throne of Mysore.

In like manner with these renowned individuals, has one adventurer succeeded another, time after time, to play his part on the political theatre of India, whose career has been marked by the same recklessness of the lives of his fellow men, and the same disregard of their rights and properties. But the scene is now changed, the plague has been stayed ; —and all this has been effected through the humanity of the British Government.

It cannot be well imagined, that, amidst such a state of society, where the hoofs of predatory cavalry were ploughing up the fields of the husbandman, and where the peaceful peasant was constrained to take on him the habiliments of the soldier, an impartial and just administration of the laws could ever existed.

The primary objects of all good governments, the greatest blessing attainable by any people, is an impartial administration of just laws. The attainment of this noble object, the British Government ; have ever professed to keep in view. It is not asserted that the present judicial system, is perfect, and that it is not open to reform. We believe that it may admit of improvement ; but this admission by no means, implies that the Government are not alive to the subject of improvement. For the truth of this assertion, we would merely say that the present system is greatly preferable to that which it has superseded, the Mahomedan system ; than which a more sanguinary one can hardly be imagined as a means of dispensing justice. The harshest features of this code have been softened, by the substitution of milder penalties. Lieutenant White, in his considerations on India, gives the following account.

‘The sanguinary law of retaliation, the excruciating practice of impaling, the mutilation of limbs, and severe bastinadoes, which were sanctioned by this code, have been altogether abolished. The atrocious practice of exacting confession by

torture no longer exists. Under the Mohammedan code of law, circumstantial evidence was never admitted. It was necessary that the crime should be substantiated by two eye witnesses and these Mahommedans. When it is recollected, that the Massulmauns formed only a tenth part of the population, and these, too, the ruling class. It must be apparent that this iniquitous rule of evidence, could only serve to secure impunity to those Mahommedans, who cruelly murdered their fellow creatures of the Hindoo faith. By regarding the evidence of either as equal in our courts, an important service was rendered to the bulk of our population. In their criminal courts, the punishments which were awarded for many offences, consisted in fines, which became the perquisite of the judge. Human nature is too weak to allow that such a power should be entrusted to any man. In the provincial courts, the fees of the law officers were not fixed by regulation, which left the ignorant suitor too much exposed to their exactions. The arbitrary power which the judge possessed in determining the trial, proved a fertile source of corruption. By making him a suitable present, a wealthy and dishonest litigant was enabled to expedite or protract the decision of his cause. But, independent of this disgraceful venality, the expense of a suit was prodigiously augmented by the large share of the property or money litigated which was taken by the Government.'

The above statement ought to carry conviction along with it. It contains a simple recital of facts, which speak much in favour of the British Government. It clearly demonstrates that the administration of justice, under the Company's rule, is free from those evils to which the former system was subject, and is better calculated to secure the happiness of the subject than the system which it has superseded.

Another great benefit resulting from the introduction of British rule into this country, is the diffusion of knowledge among the natives. Let objectors gainsay, as much as they please, the alleged advantages of British Supremacy ; this point, at the least, cannot be gainsaid, that the presence of Europeans in India, no matter in what manner they came into

it, has been the means of affording to the natives the benefits of education. The Government have their Colleges and their schools : Missionaries are industrious in diffusing knowledge wherever they can. In this way a visible improvement has been effected in the moral condition of the natives, an improvement which we are bold to say, would not have taken place, had the native governments been in existence. There cannot be a greater benefit conferred on a nation by its rulers, than by imparting to it the elements of knowledge : and the British Government have earned to themselves the proud distinction of opening a highway through that wilderness which lies between ignorance and knowledge. If, by the conquest of India by the British, no other result followed than the above, there is abundant cause for gratulation. The attempt to rescue millions of men from ignorance, the parent of numberless evils, is in itself laudable ; but when so much success has attended that attempt, it is not in measured terms that we should mete out praise to the British Government, for their endeavours in diffusing instruction amongst the natives. Darkness, thick darkness, obscured the land ; pestilence incubated, but it has been dispelled by the light which has followed the dawn of British supremacy.

We think the East India Company have, on the whole, faithfully discharged the trust reposed in them by the British nation, and that they will, with clear hands, be able to resign that trust, when that period arrives, as sooner or later it will. Although we think as above of the present government, we nevertheless think that the time has now arrived when the assumption of the ruling power on the part of the King's government should take place, considering the vast acquisition of territory which has been made ; the vast civil and military establishments that are kept up ; the rapid progress which is making by our artisans in every branch of manufacture, and the gradual improvement of the natives, it appears altogether unsuitable that a body of merchants in England should have the rule over dominions of such magnitude, and such resources. It seems fitting that an



empire of such importance as India has now become, should be released from the guardianship of a monopoly ; and that the affairs of 80 or 90 millions of men, should no longer be intrusted to the care of any body of merchants, but should now revert to the British nation. It is to be remembered that the ostensible object of the Company was trade ; but since their commercial speculations are at an end, (in the sense that they are not profitable,) there can be no good ground for the rule of this empire being continued to them for a further period. We do not think it was a disadvantage to have, in the first instance, intrusted the Company with the ruling authority : on the contrary we think, that under the king's government, India would not have benefitted so much as she has under her present rulers. The first charter was granted in the year 1600, and from that period most important political events and changes have taken place in England. There was the civil war ; the Restoration ; the expulsion of James the 2nd ; the rebellion in Ireland, and those in Scotland of 1715 and 1745 ; the American war and the Irish Rebellion in 1798. With such important matters in their hands, it may well be imagined that the home government would neither have had the inclination nor the time to devote much attention to the transactions of so distant a part of the empire. Weightier matters than the distant concerns of India, claimed its attention ; and while so much was required to be done at home, it is reasonable to conclude that little would have been done for the colonies. The case is quite altered, as it respects a chartered Company. Whatever may have been the vicissitudes and changes at home, self-interest directed their chief attention to that quarter where they had so much at stake and whence they expected such a harvest of gain. It is thus, we are persuaded, the East India Company have kept their hold on this country ; and whatever may have been their object in keeping possession of it, the ultimate consequence of this has been the supremacy of the British in India, a circumstance which, in the end, will tend to the benefit of the governed. It has somewhere been beautifully



expressed by Bishop Heber, that Providence often makes the ambition and cupidity of men, subservient to his own gracious purposes and designs. This has truly been the case, in respect to the relation of the East India Company with this country. With means the most inadequate, and purposes, at first, the most selfish and interested, they have extended their authority over the whole vast peninsula of India ; but it would be an impious arraignment of the wise dispensations of Providence, to imagine that such a thing has been permitted for evil, not for good. The advancement of this country, in civilisation, in science, and the arts, has been progressive, since her connection with England ; and her advancement will increase in proportion to her connection becoming more and more intimate. Under present circumstances, we think that India would gain more by a direct connection with Britain than through the medium of agents. It is precisely on this ground we think it would be advantageous to the Company, if the government of it were assumed by the King.

A juster estimate of what has already been done for India, could not be given, than is afforded in the following extract, from the Marquess of Hastings' speech at the College Disputations in 1817, which will form a most appropriate conclusion to the present article.

'It is true, we have not built a Tadmor in the wilderness, to impress the world with the incongruity of introducing the refinements of splendour amid uncultivated society. We have not constructed pyramids, to excite the indignation of mankind at the capricious despotism, which could enjoin such a misapplication of human exertion. But we have reared the bulwark of security round the humble hovels of the helpless. But we have raised the proud temple of impartial justice on the ruins of lawless violence. But we have established the sacred altars of Mercy, where oppression, and insult, and ravage used to print their paths with blood. And do acts like these leave no memorial ? Marble decays, and the honours of the hero perish with it : time obliterates the inscription : the

sculptured cornice mingles with the dust ; and speculation exhausts itself in devising a founder, or an excuse for those masses which encumber the plains of Egypt. Not so fades the memory of the benefactors of their kind. Final oblivion is destined for all on earth. But, as long as examples may profit, and grateful honours may stimulate to imitation, we see the cherished fame of those who have bestowed important boons on their fellow men, surviving centuries, and monuments, and even nations. Such would be the remembrance of British sway in this country, were any revolution, calamitous indeed for India, to remove our dominion. Would not the thought unceasingly recur to those who had been our subjects; that out of these regions, the demon of tyranny had fled before British energy ; that the principles which had meliorated society throughout these extensive realms, were of British inculcation ; that the comprehension of civil rights was an heirloom bequeathed to them by British bounty ?'

[ Vol. II, No. VIII ; March, 1830 ]

## COLONIZATION OF EAST INDIANS

THE Colonization of Hindoosthan by East Indians, seems to involve a glaring inconsistency. They are natives of this country ; and as such cannot be said to be *colonists* in any portion of it ; but from the circumstance of their being at present confined for the most part in the principal European settlements, the phrase has obtained pretty general currency.

Much has been said of late years regarding the condition of East Indians, and the necessity of disseminating them in the interior ; to which measure they generally have a great aversion from the effects of the policy of the existing Government towards them, which has for its end the rendering them a separate and distinct class of the population, connected indeed by the ties of nature with the Europeans and the natives, but shunned by the one, and despised by the other. That this state of things is altering, it is useless to mention ; because, the phases of policy are blazoned in every number of the Government Gazette, where the strict prohibition to entrance to the 'Sons of native Indians,' has been modified and softened into 'Sons of parents, of whom either one or both are of pure unmixed native extraction.' This change in the official phrase from Leadenhall street, has something in it 'more deep than loud ;' something which our sovereigns would fain utter but dare not ;—something which must be abstractedly considered. It seems to imply the necessity of keeping pace with the liberality of the age, though the old system of exclusion, endeared to them by long prescription, appears to be yearning at their hearts. They have for an age or thereabouts declaimed on the danger and inutility of admitting the *natives* into places of trust and power ; but it was easy to perceive that their chief aim was directed against the East Indians, of whom alone they seem to have had serious apprehensions.

But perhaps it may be in extenuation of this severe policy to say, that it surely had its origin in this country in the moral proscription which, under similar circumstances, is found to prevail in all European countries. The illegitimacy of the connection from which the greater portion of this race has sprung, may, very probably, have influenced the Court in laying on the *Veto*, which they are at present with reluctance removing. All circumstances, however, considered, we must concur in the general opinion, that something ought to be done for the East Indians ; and I cordially confess my gratitude to those whose patriotic spirit has led them to exert themselves for the removal of their disabilities, the amelioration of their condition, and the attainment of that rank in society which sooner or later they are destined to hold.

Envy is the bane of human interests. There is no measure, however patriotic or benevolent but provokes a host of opponents. The ignorant are apt to cavil at what they do not understand ; and the well informed to controvert, though they know the futility of discussion and the weakness of argument against the force of truth. Hence we find numerous misrepresentators of the East Indians' Petition to the Legislature. I cannot venture to affirm that, that document is free from errors but I believe, that no part of the complaints embraced in it is imaginary. The merits of the petition rest altogether upon the basis of truth ; and must strike conviction into every liberal mind. Indeed we may hope to see its effects at no distant period in the entire removal of every existing grievance.

But supposing, for the sake of argument, that policy prevailed in Parliament, as it long did in the case of the Irish Catholics, over the principles of justice, and that the desired change in Indian policy did not take place, though the colonization of the country by Europeans were permitted, what would be the consequence ? Imagination dreads to penetrate the maze of futurity ; it would fain spare a contemplation of the prospect !

But reason, and history, which develops to our view the

rise and fall of empires, and the causes and effects of revolutions, and the ebbs and flows of the feelings and manners of nations, may be taken in the present instance, as the best guides in an attempt to trace the proximate or remote condition of the descendants of Europeans.

The most exact parallel which can be made, is, between East Indians and the South Americans. In variety of complexion, in the policy observed towards them, and in other respects, the latter are strikingly similar to the former. They brooded in discontent, and at length breaking the chains of luxury and effeminacy, the effects of ages of degradation and despotic rule, they have now started forward to assert their rank among the nations of the earth. Future historians will delight to contemplate the sudden change. Shall we say that the East Indians will, in like manner, at some future period, when the power of England shall be on the wane, stir up the country to independance ? Should such an event ever happen, the natural consequence of long cherished animosity between Europeans and East Indians would probably be the entire expulsion of the former. In the very scene where Pizarro and Cortes conquered, are the legislative assemblies of their descendants debating the entire proscription of the European Spaniards. Strange alteration of things in the fluctuation of human affairs !

If colonization takes place without any material change, placing the East Indians on a footing of equality with Europeans, the aspect of society in this country will naturally become like that in America. There will then be three grand divisions of the inhabitants ; the *whites*, the *mixed race*, and the *blacks* : each of them separate and distinct, treading upon each other's heels, and jealous of and dissatisfied with each other. In truth, something like distinction which is very refined and striking at present, obtains at least in the principal European settlements. Sympathies are naturally very strong. Prejudices, which have gradually been fostered by political circumstances, which 'grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength,' are not to be eradicated by any legislative



enactment. The tide of popular opinion will change only when, after the lapse of years, interest and the ties of family connections shall have united them all, whatever their *Caste* or religion, in one bond of political communion.

We shall not perplex ourselves with gloomy anticipations, merely because we are unwilling to revel in the imaginary or real delights of the triumph of liberty over oppression, and the establishment of equal rights and privileges ; we shall simply look into the past and present, and then survey the immediate prospect.

The opinion of Bishop Heber is very forcible ; he has been quoted in Parliament. He states that Europeans form illicit connections with the *lowest* orders of native women ; and their offspring are a numerous class in India. But, although it is a known fact that a great part of the East Indians are the progeny of *intermarriages*, yet it is a fashionable thing among Europeans in this country to decry them *all*, as if they meant to fulfil the commandment of 'visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.' The Europeans are in the habit of regarding the East Indians in the most contemptible light ; and however wealth or rank may influence opinion in favour of some individuals, yet the general notion respecting their character remains the same. Besides, the arrogant and proud boast of superiority in point of intellectual, moral, and physical powers, which Europeans make over their degraded brethren, serves to keep up the flame of prejudice and animosity.

This state of things considered, it will, I believe, be warrantable to infer that, whatever may be the changes of policy in regard to East Indians, they will, for a series of years, be considered as a degraded class of the natives. The general condition of those not in the service may be worse. But I am sure it will not for an age be better.

It is a fact which cannot escape the most casual observation, that the East Indians treat the natives with the same *hauteur* as the Europeans treat them. If therefore, as I have

strong reason to suppose will be the case, the several classes of society are put as much upon a par as circumstances will admit of, an unreserved social intercourse in the common transactions of life will ensue. Frequent and equal communion will bind them in a social bond, and, instead of fostering discontent and animosity, prove the real and permanent security of the British empire in India.

A liberal change of policy we hope for, and we may assure ourselves of it. Colonization, beyond doubt, will ultimately prove most beneficial, though in its immediate effects, we cannot augur much for the natives in general, and the East Indians in particular.

J. S.

[ Vol. II, No. VIII ; March, 1830 ]

A WORD OF ADVICE  
TO  
THE BENGAL HURKARU AND CHRONICLE

WE recommend it to the advertised Editor of the above weathercock diurnal, to stick to his tackles and his buntings and leave us alone, for we are not to be played with; but if he will come to the scratch, again, *he will find that we have longer nails than he has.* Let this man of pledge—breaking notoriety beware how he gives us further provocation, lest we visit him with a castigation, which he will have cause to remember to the last moment of his insignificant existence. It is in our power to make this despicable libeller of all Governments, and particularly of that Government whose foot he has kissed as often as his insolence called forth its exercise, and would salute again and again with his lips in the hour of need, 'curse the hour in which he dared' to interfere with us, who, if left unmolested, are willing and contented to go on in the 'even tenor' of our way, regardless of the laugh of fools, the sneers of the envious, and the attacks of the malevolent: it is in our power to make the rotten carcass of this base traducer of that very army, to whose liberality he owes every morsel of crumbs, which he daily gorges, 'tremble in the grave.'

Does the Editor of the Hurkaru think that his silly blusterings are calculated to persuade us that the Cossitollah Bully is actually metamorphosed into the Tank square Hector, merely by a change of residence and by breathing the atmosphere of the vicinity of the late Calcutta Journal office? Should this warning fail to deter him from the dangerous game of continuing to meddle with us, we may take the trouble to exhibit the grinning baboon in his true colours, and convince the public that, however he may whitewash his sooty countenance and assume an air of gravity, he is no less

an object of derision in this unnatural disguise, than when he stands exposed in naked deformity. In spite of the long tutoring this hopeful disciple of the great Apostle of India has received, we are satisfied that he is the same blockhead now, that he was when his late master was in the habit of running his pen through his stupid lucubrations, as unfit for the public eye. And no wonder, since he cannot write English correctly ; for in writing three paragraphs, he commits as many inaccuracies. Thus he writes, 'displays evidences' instead of 'affords evidence,' 'such as is seldom equalled, never excelled,' instead of 'such as has seldom been equalled,' and 'prosaic original,' instead of 'prose original,' since *prosaic*, he ought have known, means *like prose*.

The Editor of the Hurkaru will perceive that, we are well acquainted with the system of training he has undergone, and that he has not much benefited by it. He may pretend to a knowledge of Dibdin's Library Companion, which contains merely descriptions of editions of modern books, and not characters of authors ; but we feel persuaded that he is better acquainted with the diseased condition of his own pericranium, which we hope will soon send him on another voyage to China, than with the principles of criticism and literature. Indeed if we took the trouble to examine the pretensions of this wretched newspaper scribbler, we could prove even to his satisfaction, that his ignorance is sufficiently conspicuous to entitle him to the first place in an Oriental Dunciad ; we could show the utter want of judgment, which he has frequently displayed in condemning communications, the merit of which he was himself unable to distinguish, but which he has afterwards acknowledged, *when pointed out to him* by friends at his elbow, to whom he had referred them for their opinion.

We have not forgotten the Editor of the Hurkaru's mean flattery of the Christian Investigator, to the conductors of which (some of whom are engaged in the management of the Kaleidoscope) he made a periodical avowal of his immeasurable inferiority. Let not our readers condemn our severity, the infliction of which is necessary to correct the presump-

tions of empiricism. What can we do to a loathsome insect, which buzzes about our ears, but brush it away or trample it under foot, even at the risk of being defiled by its slime, and sickened by its stench ? We now leave the Editor of the *Hurkaru* to his own reflections, which must be far from pleasant to one, who from motives of 'guilty profit' has made a practice of repeatedly violating a faith repeatedly pawned to escape that wholesome chastisement which the insolence of a low-lived miscreant always extorts ; pawned to escape threatened ruin and disgrace ; pawned to retire from that pursuit, to which he has again and again shamelessly returned, and which cannot but reflect lasting infamy on his public character. We now leave him to be daily tossed on the horns of the BULL, and whipped by his tail for his follies, and hope that the admonition we have bestowed upon him will produce the desired effect ; but if the thong will not silence the braying of the obstreperous Ass, we are determined to exercise the cudgel for that purpose.

[ Vol. II, No. VIII ; March, 1830 ]



## A VISIT TO THE SOONDERBUNS IN 1827

THIS is one of those places which I had early conceived a desire to visit, and which my youthful imagination, alive to every thing wonderful, had often attempted to picture to itself ; and various indeed, were the appearances and circumstances with which it did invest it. Never having seen such a vast and almost countless collection of woods before, my notion of it was, of course, far from being correct.

Curiosity is always more powerful in the young than in the aged ; but it is remarkable, that the objects even of youthful curiosity are seldom the same. How variously do different objects affect even them ! In some, the mention of lofty mountains, rising in every shape, ranging one above another, till they are lost in the bosom of the overhanging clouds, and stretching interminably on either hand beyond the reach of the aching eye ; rivers pouring down their sides, increasing as they run, and losing themselves at last in the ocean, which spreads its immense sheet of water over more than one half of the globe ; roaring and foaming waterfalls ; vast impenetrable jungles, scarcely produces any emotion : but this was far from being the case with me. Nothing delighted me more than the idea of ranging over high hills, exploring dark caves, and penetrating thick forests. I always longed to realize these impressive vagaries of my fancy, and on few other occasions was I so conscious of pleasure, as when under the influence of such anticipations.

It did not, however, fall to my lot to gratify my curiosity at this time : the trammels of school bound me much against my wishes to one place, and the frequent mention of it afterwards had so familiarized the idea of these jungles to me, that nothing, I believe, but occasion would have carried me there ; and yet after seeing them several times, I cannot say, that I should not like to see them again, were circumstances to determine my course that way.

I left Calcutta in the afternoon of the 15th March, and stopped below the first iron bridge across Tolly's Nullah, whence I set out at night by moonlight with the tide ; but who shall describe the vexatious circumstances which I had to encounter now ? two such lines of formidable boats lay on either side of me, that I expected every moment to be jammed between them and the boats that were pushing their way through the narrow pass before and behind. I was nearly suffocated by noise and heat, and was glad to escape the 'Stygian pool,' towards the evening\*.

The long wished-for Soonderbuns now began to make their appearance, in two lines of thinly planted brushwood on both the shores, which not only thickened as I went on, but exhibited other ranks of larger trees rising above them, all lank and sickly-looking, until I found myself completely immersed in one vast impenetrable jungle not to be compared with any thing I had seen before, but considerably below the formidableness with which my youthful imagination had enshrouded it. As I looked around I felt a strange sensation creep on me unlike any thing I could remember. A thousand strange fancies now woke to existence in my mind. Presently I saw a young leopard or something very like it, pop out of a bush, stare at me for two or three seconds. and then vanish out of sight ; but it went not alone, my imagination now kindled by the glimpse of a reality pursued it, and I thought I saw myself surrounded by wild beasts of the most ferocious species, and I could not help reflecting on the many lives than have been lost here in the attempts to cut these jungles. I see a column of slow rising smoke—

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\*It is highly desirable, nay absolutely necessary, that our authorities should cause all boats waiting for the tide or any other purpose, to keep on one side of the nullah leaving the other free or those who have the tide and are *progressing*. Enormously large boats should also be prohibited from coming so far down, as a single boat sometimes occupies nearly the whole breadth of the creek.

O'er top the lofty wood that skirts the wild,  
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat  
Their miserable meal—

my mind at length sunk into a gloomy horror. Night and my cabin, however, soon enshrouded the whole phantom, and sleep followed.

This place is well known as the den of tigers, which have been described as of an enormous size. How large they are, is not known nor said, probably those who describe them as such never saw them and every thing terrific, unseen, is always larger than it should be. Of late no instances of the appearance of tigers have occurred, at least none have been known, but formerly it was not uncommon for them to make a descent upon the wood-boats at night, and steal away some of their inmates. When such incidents occur, it is customary with the boat people to plant an inverted oar on the shore if the individual taken away by the tiger be a *Dauree*, or the rudder if a *Magee*; probably as a mark of warning to others against stopping at that particular spot. The first man that attempted begging here was, I am told, destroyed by a tiger, and his monument, at which trifling gifts are proffered, exists there, I believe, to this day. There are now in the Soonderbuns two or three beggars, or as they are called by the natives *Sanees*, who live on the contributions of passers-by, and are for nothing more remarkable than for their impoliteness, which shows itself in showers of abuses, when their cupidity is disappointed. One man, who was murdered and robbed, is said to have made 5000 Rupees by these means. I

At a place called Uttharebankee there is the most considerable, or rather the most venerated tomb of one of those *Peers*, as they are also denominated; and those who preside over it derive a handsome emolument. It is said, they pay Government a certain sum per annum for a license to avail themselves of the fruits of the veneration paid to the memory of tatterdemalion *Gunjukhor*, who had become almost divine by

forsaking the society of men for that of tigers and other beasts of these forests.

In these jungles, besides other unknown animals, there is a great number of deer, which are frequently seen very early in the morning drinking water, and which make the whole place echo with their cries at night. I have seen many of them of the spotted kind. The howlings of jackalls and the screeching of owls are heard at night, and in the morning the crowing of cocks and hens, besides which, very few other birds salute your presence with their warblings.

These jungles are intersected by numberless channels, running and crossing in various directions and points, the navigation of which is in consequence both curious and puzzling. The natives distinguish the places or points which they go with one tide and at which they wait for another by the name of *Kutals*, which are alternately long and short. The course of the tides through these perplexingly winding creeks may more easily be conceived than described ; but I cannot help mentioning a curious circumstance that arrests the attention after passing the last bridge, at the place where the toll-gatherer's thanah is situated. This spot is the point where two currents meet, one setting in from the Soonderbuns side ; the other from the Hooghly river. Boats therefore entering Tolly's Nulah with the flood tide here meet others coming from the opposite direction with the same tide in their favour, while beyond this point again each encounters an adverse tide. At ebb the currents flow back from this point in the opposite courses, the one towards the Soonderbuns, the other towards the Hooghly. The number of boats meeting together here at the flood tide is almost incredible, and any attempt to pass on without resorting to violence, or running the risk of having the boat rubbed to pieces would be absolutely impossible. The cause of this dangerous assemblage is the boatmen's availing themselves of the tide at the same time in the opposite quarters and meeting at this place, and others pressing after them jam the foremost into an impenetrable mass. In this state they remain until the setting



in of the ebb tide, when they move on in their respective courses and make room for the passage of those who had come in with the flood. The toll office is therefore judiciously situated, as it enables its officers, at such times, very deliberately to make the collections.

Were the banks cleared away of their jungles, so as to admit of towing the boat, it would very much expedite journeying through these channels. As they are, however, they are preferred by many to going through the Jelinghee, and 'are so disposed (observes Major Rennell) as to form a complete inland navigation throughout and across the lower part of the delta, without either the delay of going round the head of it, or the hazard of putting to sea.'

The water of these channels is brackish, and overflows to a considerable distance in the interior at flood tide; and abounds with alligators and a great variety of shell fish. These animals are particularly to be found in the jungles on the borders, especially amongst thorned bushes from which it is difficult to steal them away. Once or twice I made the attempt, and escaped very nearly being torn to pieces, though not without bringing away some of them, which were pronounced by competent judges to be rare and pretty.

In the economy of nature we are frequently at a loss to discover the utility of parts of it. Among the works of a wise and benevolent being, such as the Creator of 'the heavens and the earth' is, we naturally expect to find nothing useless; and so far it is right, but we should never confound the absence of beauty with that of utility. If we look for the former in these jungles, we shall be disappointed. Taken in the abstract, an endless tedious forest, though clothed with 'everlasting verdure,' can but cast a sombre cloud over the mind, the melancholy mood of which eagerly seeks relief in the loveliness of a smiling lawn, or the laughing sight of fields crowned with golden harvests. Variety too is wanting. A sameness of appearance meets the eye in every place, and 'palls and satiates' the taste, but as to their utility there can be no question. I need scarcely mention that a considerable quantity of salt is manufactured from the saline waters of



these channels ; but I believe not so much as to supply the whole consumption of Bengal and its dependencies, which is what Major Rennel asserts, though it would not be difficult to raise as much and more were people encouraged to do it, and were it not an article of monopoly. Nor need I state that these jungles supply the greatest part of the wood used in Calcutta and its neighbourhood in fuel. They are also employed in making boats ; but I know not upon what authority it is affirmed, that if any attempts have been made to clear away these jungles, they have hitherto miscarried. Any one may satisfy himself as to the truth of the contrary by paying a visit to them. The success of the attempts have been fully equal to the means employed. Within a few years considerable portions of them have been removed and both populated and cultivated. This is often not visible, owing to the line of trees left on the skirts of the deserts, which conceal the improvements made within ; but I have been sometimes agreeably surprised when either by mistake or design I have taken a new channel. I have found, what I little expected, large tracts of land with flourishing paddy plants on them ; but these were some of the lowest parts of the delta. About Utharebankee, and further on, it is much higher, and not subject to inundation, where one or two considerable villages are met with, besides a small Gunj or Bazar, where articles for native consumption can be had, though of course dearer than at most other places. It is pleasing to reflect that what was once only a den of wild beasts is now made to yield to not a few their 'daily bread,' and this in spite of the impracticability with which its cultivation has been threatened. Hamilton, who is here alluded to, observes, that 'it is not practicable to bring into culture\* these salt marshy lands, for the most part

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\* How differently has our good Governor thought ! These very 'salt and marshy lands' have been granted to Europeans for cultivation. It is however a pity that some fairer portion of Hindoosthan has not been given for the application of European skill and capital, as there can be no doubt as to the benefit that would result from such a measure. It is plain from this grant, that the need of European assistance is felt.

overflowed by the flood ; nor is it desirable, when so much good land, in more healthy situations, remains imperfectly occupied. The existence of these forests also has always been considered of importance in a political point of view, as it presents a strong natural barrier along the southern frontier of Bengal. Great quantities of excellent salt are here manufactured, and esteemed of peculiar sanctity, as being extracted on the banks of the Ganges. The woods also present an inexhaustible supply of timber for fuel, boat building, and other purposes.' A consideration superior to all these, renders it desirable that these jungles should be cleared away ; viz. the insalubrious influence that they must exercise, from their contiguity, on the health of the inhabitants of Calcutta.

—From woods

Impenetrable shade, recesses foul  
In vapours rank, and blue corruption wrapp'd,  
Whose gloomy horrors no desperate foot  
Has ever dared to pierce, there wasteful forth  
Walks the dire power of pestilent disease.

Some suppose the real name of these jungles to be *Chunderbun*, because that tract is still comprehended in the ancient Zumeendaree of *Chunderdeep* ; but the most probable conjecture is that this present designation is a corruption of *Sindoorbun*. The wood which chiefly composes these forests is called *Soondree* which means handsome or beautiful ; but I imagine *Sindooree* to have been the name originally given to it, on account of its colour, which, in its green state, resembles the *Sindoor* or vermilion, a stuff applied by Hindoo women to their foreheads. Thus also the fine vermilion shaded mango is called *Soondree Am*, which should probably also be pronounced *Sindooree*, every thing red being a peculiar object of Hindoo admiration.

I have had occasion to admire the effects which that picturesque plant, *Phoereia Poludosa*, or *Hintal* of the natives

has upon the generally gloomy scenery that prevails throughout the passage of the Soonderbuns, especially as it is the subject of a magical tale ; the purport of which is, that a staff or walking stick made of it has the virtue of rendering the possessor invulnerable to the attacks of ghosts, hobgoblins, and evil spirits of all forms and magnitudes, of all tempers and powers. Hence it is very common for those who pass through these jungles to supply themselves with such a stick, which they seldom part with for a trifle. I will not grudge them the comfort of the possession of this magic wand ; but it is right to mention that this wood is generally used throughout these parts to deck small craft, which is done by splitting the trunk of the tree either into two or four pieces, and scraping them smooth.

These deserts also afford occasion to add another proof to the strange but melancholy propensity in the uncultivated mind to deify every curious, terrific, and majestic object in nature.

The poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind,

has also assigned to this place the protection of a genius or guardian spirit, who is known to him by the name of *Ghazee Sahib*, of whom, I regret, I have not been able to learn any farther than that he was a person of peculiar sanctity, who had either taken refuge in these jungles from some mistortune, or had banished himself from society for some unknown reason, perhaps like Parnell's hermit to 'pass his days with God ;' a good purpose, but for which no one need seek solitude, much less these gloomy shades. The natives pay a peculiar respect of his memory, and offer *sirnees* to him whenever they enter his territories ; and own his sovereignty over these woods so far that they will touch none of them without his leave, which I know not how they obtain, though I have remarked, that they generally take them from such places as have already had the axe applied to it. *Ghazee Sahib*, however, must be considered only as a subordinate, for the tutelar saint of the whole race of Bengal boatmen, is *Peer Budur*,

whose name they invariably invoke, not only when they push the boat from shore, or after anchorage, but also every now and then, as they proceed on their aquatic perigrinations. The place where he flourished in the glory of his rags and clouds of *gunja* smoke, derives its name from him. It lies somewhere at the commencement of these jungles, and is called *Budurtulah*.

To one in quest of knowledge, and delighting in scientific inquiries, the Soonderbuns present a large field for research. An individual of versatile mind and extensive acquirements, would here find abundance of useful and interesting employment. I have said that the channels which intersect these jungles abound with testaceous animals, and I am sure his expectations would not be disappointed, were he to attempt a description of them. Nor would he, if a botanist, find his pains bestowed in vain, could he gather courage enough to peep into them once. Indeed, were a person merely to examine the soil of the place, which is one of the richest in Bengal, he would discover a great deal to say about it. He would be struck with the effects of the salt water on the banks of the river, where the mould is so soft that it cannot bear the weight of even very small objects. I have been up to the middle of the thighs in it while looking for shells. A little higher again, he will find firm clay. An endless series of experiments might be made in this delta.

A WANDERER.

[ Vol. II, No. X ; May, 1830 ]

SKETCHES  
OF  
THE NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF  
THE HINDOOS AND MOOSSULMOUNS  
ESPECIALLY OF THE PROVINCE OF BENGAL

The study of our fellow creatures is, at all times, useful and interesting. In taking a survey of our race, as it is scattered over the whole face of the earth, we are struck with surprise to find in what different situations, relations and circumstances they exist. Descended from one common stock, one pair, and preserving the prominent features of the species, what shades of difference distinguish one individual from another, one nation from another. How diversified are their colours and countenances ? How various their customs and manners, their languages and ideas, their modes of living and government ?

Men may be studied as individuals of the species, as members of families, and as parts of societies and nations. In all and each of these characters every thing relating to them claims a particular interest, and seldom fails of please us when brought to our notice in a legible form. It is on this account that 'Lord Kaime's Sketches of the History of Man' is read with pleasure even by those who are tired before they get through half of another work. The immense deal of matter comprised in those volumes, at once informs, amuses and surprises us. With what a number of nations we at once become acquainted in them ?

Though Hindoostan has long been in our possession, there is reason to believe, we are far from being thoroughly acquainted with the character of its inhabitants. The means of knowing have not been wanting ; but the peculiar interest which the subject claims has not been felt : it has been lost amidst the eager pursuit of other objects. By many who have



given us a delineation of their character, they have either been misunderstood or misrepresented, and, to say the least, their accounts have seldom been free from partialities. We know very little of them beyond those points in which the circumstances of the metropolis represent them,—a representation which can never be allowed to be perfectly correct. It may exhibit them in some refined features partaking more of the shades of a European gentleman than those of an Indian. In the metropolis some of the lightest classes, classes irrelative of caste, are seen in some of their best traits, but most of the lowest, in the very worst, and this, not because they have degenerated, but because the circumstances that there call the failings, passions and vices of human nature into powerful operation and conspicuous view, are very little known out of it where the majority reside ; and it is from a study of them principally that we can ascertain what a Hindoo or Mussulman in reality is.

It is much to be regretted that some of our well educated native fellow subjects have not deemed it laudable to undertake such a work as would, from their intimate knowledge of the characters of their own classes, be productive of much benefit to the public, and create that interest in the minds of Europeans which vague ideas and imperfect acquaintance with their manners have hitherto failed to produce. Much national vanity would, no doubt, be seen mixed up in a picture drawn by such hands, as the Hindoos and Mussulmauns, especially the latter, are not free from this common failing ; but still, few persons would be found fitter for such a purpose. They could, if they chose, as it were, under the doors of their houses where the chief traits of their character seem to be concealed at present, and at once let us into the secret, separated as they are from each other by castes, and more so from us by national habits and partialities, we can know little of what passes behind the curtain, where we chiefly acquire our knowledge of the character of other nations. The reserve which they manifest towards us, and which is often mistaken for a national feature of their character is

owing more to ourselves than to any inherent principle or fault in them. Within their matted walls they are as social, convivial, and communicative as any other nation upon earth with whom we are acquainted ; at least, if we could gain admittance there, we would find that they do not in proportion differ more from other nations, than one nation of Europe does from another of the same quarter.

It is, in this precise way, that we arrive at our knowledge of other national characters. How do we come to a correct notion of the English nation ? Is it from their unrivalled military and naval achievements, their diplomatic connections with foreign courts, their expertness in trade and commerce, their gigantic strides and attainments in knowledge and discoveries, their dexterousness in the arts and manufactures, and other such traits and excellencies ? The knowledge of these would point them out as a *great* people, but it would scarcely distinguish them from other nations who, though less famous in these colossal points of a highly civilized nation, might likewise justly lay claim to the same epithet. They also are great nations. In an estimate formed of national characters from such particulars, some of which are so capricious in their career and destiny, France, America and Russia, would also claim to be ranked with England as *great* nations, and the Greeks and Romans, who were once the sole possessors and masters of these brilliant attainments and excellencies, and who infinitely excelled the rest of the world in them would now have to be excluded.

In forming an estimate of the national character, such particulars as display the greatness of a nation should not be overlooked ; but it is not in them we must expect to find any thing peculiarly distinguishing or striking ; there are a hundred other points, less splendid indeed, but the true and perhaps the only traits, which identify and mark the difference between nations. The national *stiffness* of the manners of the English compared with the *excessive politeness* and *vivacity* of the French, the *sluggish calculating* turn of mind of the Netherlanders compared with the *amorous* or rather *romantic*

propensities of the Italians, place before us some very clear data from which to form a just estimate of the character of any of them. Next let the investigation be extended to their *domestic economy*. Regard the Englishman's *fire side*, the Frenchman's *loittee*, the Dutchman's *social board*, and the Italian's *amours*, and a further trait of their respective characters may be gleaned. View them again in their *family relations*. The *formality* visible between the Englisman and his wife, the *unblushing freedom* with which a French lady receives a stranger in her bed-chamber to attend upon her ; the *exclusion of the wife* from the conversations and convivialities of the Dutchman's *table*, and the *dubious virtue* of an Italian fair one, contrasted with each other throw a light which enables us to form a still more definite notion of their different characters. Thus pursuing their manners from one scene to another, from the town to the village, the house to the market, the barn to the field, the counter to the manufactory, as we go along, we become familiar as it were with their very natures, and cease to wonder at the difference which each exhibits. We are either pleased, or we condemn according to our ideas, feelings or *sang froid*.

With regard to the Hindoos, and Mosulmans, especially the former, our want of intimacy with their habits of living and conducting themselves in their own houses, towards their immediate friends, and among their families, has hitherto prevented our being better acquainted with them. We have taken very little interest in the investigation of their manners to be able to know much of them—nay, we have despised them, and why ? because we have regarded ourselves as their masters, and very little more,—we have cared very little what they are, and consequently have not troubled ourselves about them beyond making use of them to forward our views, whatever they may have been.

Somethings of this nature we have expected to see in the columns and pages of our Newspapers and Periodicals ; but the same apathy seems to prevail these channels of information likewise, and to pervade both the editors and contributors.

Rous, plays, tiger-huntings, falls of aerolites, balls and entertainments, duels and controvercies in which Europeans are the sole monopolists of courage and skill, are, indeed, abundantly poured down upon us ; but on the subject in question there has been almost a total silence.

The object of the series of papers now offered to the readers of this work, is, in some measure, to supply this deficiency by conducting them through some of those scenes which, as we have already observed, exhibits the most correct features of a nation's character. We design to lead them into a variety of such concealed pictures of the national peculiarities of the Hindoos and Mossulmauns in every sphere and circumstance of life as we are familiar with, and we ought to be familiar with a good deal of them, after having been among them from our earliest days. The question is where we shall commence, considering the overwhelming quantity of matter at command, the crowds of things that press upon us and invite our notice. To get rid of needless questions and anxieties, we shall cut matter the short, and propose in this number to introduce our readers, with their permission, into the lying in chamber of the Indian lady, which will at the same time serve as a specimen of our future articles, in which we shall amuse our readers, with the juvenile manners of the subjects of our papers, and the conduct of their parents towards them, till they are old enough to engage in the sports of the field &c. When we have arrived thus far, it will be necessary to alter our plan and forsaking the regular order we shall have pursued, we shall follow the more irregular habits of our youngsters ; and in proportion as he becomes a man, and the girl a woman, and begins to move in the more sober spheres of public and private life, we shall widen our plan, selecting and arranging such particulars as will be most entertaining, if not useful. But we shall not rest here ; we shall conduct our readers still higher ; we shall show them native men and women as they are in middle age and as they are in old age, when, 'silvered o'er with grey,' they call for particular care and commiseration ;



and here, we hope, to take leave of our readers with the satisfaction that we have done our duty to the best of our inclination, means, and endeavours.

We are sensible of the magnitude of the undertaking, and will perhaps, therefore, be thought to have spoken with a little too much confidence. We know that a hundred articles would scarcely suffice to exhibit what we wish to show, and that patience on the part of our readers, and perseverance on ours must be uniformly exercised, if they would have and we would give, were they only brief, sketches of the national characteristics of the Hindoos and Mussulmauns, but we shall trust to our readers for indulgence for the faults and deficiencies of which we might be guilty.

It would hardly have been necessary to inform the reader that the Province of Bengal is somewhat larger in extent than the Island of Great Britain, though its population may be allowed to be considerably less ; but for the wish to premise, that we mean to confine ourselves principally to its native Hindoo and Mossulmaun inhabitants. For the same reason we shall merely specify that the subdivisions of Bengal into districts or Zilahs are Choubees or twenty-four Purgunuhs, Baquergunge, Chatgam, Treepoora or Komila, Juhangeenugur or Dhaka, Sreehut or Sylhet, Moomansingh or Nuseerabad, Rajshahee or Latoor, Bærbhoom, Bankoora or Jungul muhal, Burdwan, Hooglee, Hijleekanthee, Medneepoor, and the other subordinate subdivisions or petty independent Zilahs that have been recently created, such as Fureedpoor, Bhoolooa &c. &c. From all these we intend to glean such data as will throw light on the native character, and, as we hope, both inform and amuse the reader.

On the seventh month of the conception the native women and their friends become confident of safety, and accordingly celebrate the ceremony called *sutwansa* or *supto masa*. The conceived takes more than usual pains at her bath, has a suit of new clothes presented to her by her husband, if he can afford it, and sometimes by other members of the family also. She puts on her best trinkets, and if an heir is in the womb,



she grows in the affection of her husband. If she be a Mossulmeen, a party of songstresses, called *marasins* are procured, three or four of whom usually compose a band. One of these has a tom-tom or *dholuk*, and another a pair of small symbals called *munjeera*, while the rest perform the vocal part of the music in accompaniment. In the course of the day she receives various congratulatory presents from the families of her relations, and the night is generally spent in hearing the songs of the *marasins*, who are dismissed at break of day with about a rupee, unless the family be rich, in which case a piece or two of cloth is added to a more liberal compensation for exerting their lungs all night.

After the completion of the seventh month the husband rarely meets the wife, who is said to discourage all interviews it. The midwife now begins to pay preparatory visits, at each of which she performs the operation of rubbing the womb with oil and *champooing* the body of her patient, and is dismissed with a fee according to the extent of the means of the house. The richer classes pay a rupee, but the lower give her about a seer or two of rice, some oil, and the cup which contained the oil before mentioned, together with the piece of cloth on which the patient lay if she be of any respectability. Some of them, with a view to escape this tax upon their purse, lie on mats, and instead of brazen use earthen cups, the motive of which being easily detected by the shrewed midwife, she makes no scruple to rally them on their illiberality mixed up with a few obscene jokes ; but generally goes away in good humour under the expectation of a larger, or, at least, the usual fee ere long.

There is scarcely a village in which there is not a midwife to attend upon women of each caste, though there have been instances to our knowledge in which the midwife of one caste has been welcomed by the patient of another, sometimes from necessity, at others from choice ; but such instances are rare. Generally each particular caste has its own midwife, whose emoluments are proportioned to her skill and good nature. Her abilities, however, are seldom or never estimated

according to the dexterity with which she helps the delivery : the survival or non-survival of the child stamps her character as good or bad, skilful or unskilful. The consequence of this mode of estimation is just as it might be expected—if the child lives it is all very well—very fortunate for her ; but if it dies, whether the event happen sooner or later, whether a day or two months after, she loses her reputation and ceases to be sought after as hereto fore. Hence the best recommendation of her services is the number of living children, the produce, as she terms it, of her own hands, in the families which she has attended. This she seldom fails to mention whenever she is called to do her duty, with a view both to encourage her patient and to raise, if possible, her expected fee. She has always an inexhaustible store of good and bad things to say of the various patients upon whom she has had the honour or misfortune to attend. So and so gave her so much money, such and such suits of clothes ; so may jewels, brass or copper pots, &c. ; while, on the other hand, so and so was shabby or shameless enough to give so much only, or this and that thing only, at the same time she relates their family history. This, however, when we remember, that it is not done simply to gratify her loquacity or to create a favourable disposition towards herself, but to divert the attention of her patient from her pains, will appear less censurable than it would under other circumstances.

Desirable as the union of a theoretical with a practical knowledge of every profession must be, on various accounts, yet such is the effect of the latter, that the native midwives are far from being despicable in their profession. Many, indeed, would be found among them, who had proved themselves unworthy of so important a trust, but generally they are very well known to do credit to the task. We cannot, therefore, without some qualification, ascribe to the following character given of them by an eminent physician. 'Her mode of procedure' he says, 'is the most rough and inhuman conceivable.' Rough it is in some measure, and, we shall add, uncouth,

but hardly enough so, to deserve the epithet *inhuman*, still less *most* inhuman. Even roughness will not be so easily detected in those of them whose practice has been extensive and frequent. Unnecessary operations do form a part of their system ; but where is the midwife who is not chargeable with such faults ? They are also charged with using 'incantations and offerings' to some heathen god on the occasion. The latter is true, the former is not so universal as it is assumed, and both might be objected to and prevented, if thought proper by Christian ladies ; but may we not observe to their shame, how few of them invoke that assistance from their Creator, which these poor ignorant creatures seek from their unmeaning deities, at this important crises. The practice of availing of the superior knowledge and skill of medical gentlemen, in cases of confinement, has been recently adopted, and that only, we believe, in cases of extreme necessity. Hitherto the East Indian ladies have avoided their aid from a delicacy, which we are weak enough, if weakness it may be called, to approve, except where danger is in question. We could heartily wish that a few dozens of *bona fide* midwives, well educated in their profession, were imported into India to expel the man-midwives from the chambers of the sex, whose persons should be sacred to the eyes of all but their husbands. We feel confident that they would find ample practice and abundant opportunities of emoluments. From the complaints, however, which we have read in medical works of the deficiencies of European midwives, we are obliged to state, that unless they possess a thorough and scientific knowledge of their profession, they would not, perhaps, be preferred to native midwives. We have known instances of the latter's making 100 Rs. and more per month, besides presents of clothes, brass furniture &c. which it is usual for them to receive.

But we fear we are becoming desultory, and should return to the subject in hand. The moment the child is brought forth, the midwife exclaims 'a boy ! a boy !' with a view to cheer the spirits of her patient, a boy being universally the

greater desire of Indian women, and very likely of that of women of every other nation. The babe is neglected till the *placenta* has been brought away, to expedite which a handful of pepper-corn is given to the mother to chew and if that fails to produce a suffocation, her flaming hand is stuffed into her mouth, which, by creating an excitement to vomit, generally has the desired effect. The infant is then washed and swaddled, and presented to its mother, accompanied with such quaint and humorous remarks, as 'fie on thee, child, what a hideous flat nose thou hast brought with thee ! what small eyes ! what a large mouth ! and fie on thee, woman ! what a dark womb is thine that has produced such a black child ! ' These observations are usually retorted on her with interest by the old women who may happen to be nigh, which is not unfrequently the case. 'Aye, aye, that shows how clever thou art in thy trade, and, of course thou canst not expect much for such a hideous child.'

When the navel string is to be cut, the midwife refuses to perform the operation unless some small present, which she demands as a customary fee, is given, or promised to be given, to her ; but she insists upon the grant of the cloth on which the patient lay, which is without objection given to her immediately. She is required to repeat her visits for one and twendays, at the end of which she discharged with her fee. She attends less on account of the mother than the infant, whose navel she is required to press in, which she does with her thumb, previously and repeatedly held over the flame of a lamp. At the same time she changes the *pan* or betel leaf which it is a part of her practice to bind on the head of the child.

The most intimate friend and nearest relations out of doors, and some of those even of the latter at home, are not allowed to enter the room of the patient before the fifth day through fear of contracting a ceremonial pollution. This prohibition extends even to the husband who especially must not enter room. On the fifth day, which is called *punchhotee*, the patient, if in health, is permitted to bathe. A jelly, to use the



term, compounded of the long and ward pepper, ginger, and *goor* or molasses, is given to her on which she feasts for several days. On the *punchhotee*, it is usual with all, or most, of the members of the household to partake of this composition, lotaus-full of which are also sent to those that are abroad. On the evening of this day, the lamp which had been kept incessantly burning till then, from the day of confinement, is put out, and another, a fivefold one, that is, with five wicks, is substituted to illuminate the room on the notable night. In respectable families, the relations and friends who come to see the child, put each a rupee, an eight or four anna piece into this lamp, for the benefit of the midwife who is, of course, a punctual attendant on the occasions, and claims and receives the whole of the contributions as a perquisite. The best part of the night is spent in convivialities. A band of *merasins* beforementioned is procured, who entertain the visitors with their vocal and instrumental music, and sometimes also with dancing; when it is not uncommon for the visitors to exert their vocal powers also, either in company with the professional songstresses, or separately. In these gayeties, the men participate in no manner whatever, not even separately among the friends and relations of their own sex. They are entirely confined to women and children. In more opulent families, greater expense is incurred. Regular nautches are given, both in the *zunanah*, and in the *duhbez*, or sitting apartment of the chief or master of the house, presents of wearing apparel are made to the slaves and servants of both sexes, and general festivity is kept up nearly through the night.

On the twenty-first day the mother of the infant appears out of doors, the midwife, as we have already observed, is dismissed, and every thing is restored to its usual order. Many of these superstitious practices, we regret to say have obtained among East Indian families, who, we fear, too implicitly submit to the often whimsical directions of their midwives and native attendants.

Native women never employ wet-nurses, except when



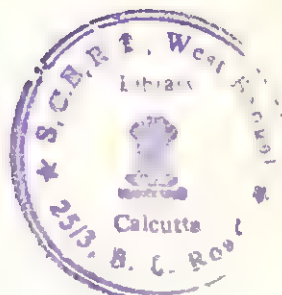
their own milk dries up, or when they let themselves out to nurse the children of the great, in which case the most painful circumstances generally follow ; their own offspring falling sacrifices. They are given out to be nursed by yet poorer women, who perform the part of mothers to them for the compensation perhaps of a rupee a month and sometimes barely for food and raiment. Along with them, these women sometimes nurse their own children also, but not generally, when, of course, they are obliged to consign their own children to some still poorer than themselves, unless they can find some of their own relatives who have affection enough to divide their milk between them and their own children. In any of these cases, it is seldom, that the children thus nursed survive long, and it is painful to reflect that these sacrifices are often purchased at the expense of the vanity or indolence of those, who will not, when they can, nurse their own offspring but consign them to others to be nursed. We could mention many instances of such unnatural conduct, but that would lead us out of our way, and we shall, therefore, say no more on the subject than that we think we compensate the wet-nurses we employ for own children very handsomely by giving them high wages, and a still more handsome *bedagee*, or dismissing money, but we can by no means calculate upon the consequences that might reasonably be expected to ensue to their own children.

ALLTERS WILLIERS

## II

### SELECTIONS FROM REFORMER

*REFORMER*, a liberal weekly edited and published by Prosunna Coomar Tagore from February 1831 to the end of 1833. These selections ( 1833 ) are on the theme of social emancipation of women, especially criticising the evils of Koolin polygamy and the problem of young widows. Most of these are in the form of Letters to Editor and editorial comments.



## ON FEMALE EDUCATION

( To the Editor of the *Reformer* )

(1)

Sir,

Much has been said upon the subject which I have undertaken to bring to the public notice, and much light had been thrown in the English as well as a few Bengalee papers of this Presidency for examining it thoroughly. But seeing, the failure in both quarters, I beg to write a few lines upon it, which you will accomplish my design by publishing through the medium of your valuable paper.

The subject is, should females be educated or not. This is a subject which deserves the attention of every generous mind, and ought to be considered in every respect as an important one. Some of the Native Editors in their Presidency, have already given their opinion in the negative by declaring that, "we do not see any solid advantage in teaching them ; "because they will not be able to procure money ; "on the contrary they will be apt to make mischievous deeds daily, which will bring men into eternal "misery and shame."

According to their sagacious observation I beg to state here some of my opinions which, I hope, may be suited to the taste of your readers.

The high sentiments which they have already expressed, requires our best thanks and ought to be perpetually remembered. But Mr. Editor, I beg to ask them, what is the duty of philanthropist and a patriot :—do they mean surely to keep their fellow subjects as under from the path of education and virtue, and from the possession a social life. No ? not this : but on the contrary women are at liberty to do those things

which will lead them to a good path or to a good end. Now the manifold advantages which they would reap from doing this are so numerous, that it is beyond our power to describe. Let everyman of high sense judge, let every liberal man exert his utmost to improve their condition. But why should they not be educated ? This is, Mr. Editor, very amazing ! Well, I beg to ask them two or three words which are written in the following lines. Do not women possess a thirst after knowledge as the men do ? do they not possess a real desire of examining worldly happiness as the others ? do they not possess a desire of changing their sad condition in which they are distressed ? do they not possess a human feeling and human sense ? are they not formed with the same dust of others ? are they not implanted with the same seed ? do they think that they are only made for cooking and spinning whole day ? do they think that God has formed them for slavery. No. By no means, they are equal in every respect to men both as to sense and as to conscience. Then why do my sagacious friends entertain such an object and...nation, I cannot ascertain. Let every heretic come forward and search how far false superstition can be banished from the native minds, let every friend of native improvement come and take a retrospect of the venerable Mahabharat and Puran as in Bengalee, let every author compare the present and past condition of India, let the ancient writers of Indian History rise up from their grave and enlarge their subjects yet every party describe her glaring state, let every Bramin cry for the abolition of their fallacies, let every nation imitate its civilise and reformed character. With this I conclude by saying, that the objection which they brought is not fact, and utterly inconsistent with reason—education is a thing which makes man certainly happy and guides him through the just path of virtue and happiness. It polishes our disposition, refines our characters, nay it is the ornament of human nature and the solid basis of human happiness. A life without it, is just like a brute. But moreover you may consider, Mr. Editor, have they possessed a bit of knowledge in their minds, then they would

have scarcely done all these abominable things. Such as Ghatto Poojah and Shasty Poojah. But in fact these things only occurred for want of good education and therefore to release them from the heavy shackles of superstition, education, as I have greatly considered, is requisite in every respect and so it ought to be carefully implanted in every female mind.

Calcutta Simlah April 1, 1833

I remain Sir, your obdt. servt.

Sree Ram Chatterjee.

[ *Reformer*, 12 May, 1833 ]

( 2 )

Sir,

There are many prejudices, which are entertained by our countrymen, concerning female education and they actually think themselves that if all the ladies be profoundly learned, some inconvenience might arise from it, but at the same time I must confess that it does not appear to me that a woman will be rendered less acceptable in the world, or worse qualified to perform any part of her duty in it, by having employed her earlier ages in the cultivation of her mind. Much time will still remain, if a few hours every day, be spent in reading, for the improvement of the mind, and the acquisition of the usual accomplishments. Mr. Editor there is no room to doubt it if she be successful in her pursuit, her mind will imbibe an elegance which will naturally diffuse itself over her conversation, address and behaviour. It is wellknown that internal beauty contributes much to perfect external grace. I



believe it will also be favourable to virtue, and will help greatly in restraining from any conduct grossly insulting and obviously improper, Mr. Editor allow me to point out one of the best arguments in favour of the education of women, it is which that enables them to superintend the domestic education of their children in their earlier periods, especially of daughters. Ancient histories acquaint us, that it was the glory of the Ancient Roman matrons, to devote themselves to economy, and the care of their children's education.

I leave it to the heart of a feeling father to determine, whether it is not cruel to endanger the morals of his offspring for the sake of promoting her worldly interest, or gratifying her vanity and his own ambition.

June 30, 1833.

I am your obdt. servt.

H. D. Sircar.

[*Reformer*, 4 August, 1833]

*Editorial Comment on this letter :—*

The important subject of female education, we are glad to find, continues to engage a share of the attention of our enlightened friends. A writer under the signature of H. D. Sircar, whose letter will be found in a preceding col. has made some very just remarks on the importance and utility of educating the Hindoo women. It is a very mistaken notion to suppose that the early education of a child should be commenced when he arrives at an age at which he can be sent to school. True it is that he may at that age commence with propriety to learn the rudiments of the English language and of some of the arts and sciences which might be expected to be of use to him in life : but his moral and physical education begins even from the mother's lap—an education which is of far greater importance in fitting one for a useful member of society than the acquirement of any particular

language art or science. These in the hands of a man are like a well tempered weapon capable of doing much execution in whatever work its power may be employed : but it is his moral education which enables him to employ the powers which he possesses by his acquirements to useful and laudable purposes. Should there be any defect in his moral education, should his mind, when tender, have received any wrong bias, should he in his early years have acquired prejudices unfavourable to the case of morality and virtue, the greater his powers of mind are by the acquirement of literary and scientific knowledge, the greater will be the danger of his prostituting these powers at the unholy shrine of passion and vice.

The education of man may be properly divided into two branches ; the one which enables him to proceed onward in the career of life, and the other which enables him to direct that career to a happy goal. The former is acquired in the school or by the help of private teachers ; but the latter is almost exclusively the province of paternal care and solicitude. This branch of education is unfortunately too little thought of, though the effects of its neglect are daily before our eyes. But who should be blamed for it but parents. Is it not absurd to expect gold and gems from a soil which has no traces of a mine or a rich harvest from a sandy desert. The same is the case in regard to our countrymen. The women, upon whom devotes the physical and the first (therefore the most important) part of moral education, are for the most part totally ignorant of those moral qualities which are necessary to fit a man for a useful member of a society, particularly as society is at present constituted. How can it therefore be expected that the early education of our countrymen will be properly attended to.

In the course of the above remarks we have mentioned physical education, that is a proper care of the bodily frame during its growth. Though of the last importance this subject seldom or never engages the attention of our countrymen. Content with bestowing on their offspring a splendid

scholastic education, they entirely neglect his physical education. The consequence is, their children frequently grow up to be clever men ; but are unfortunately deprived of that robustness of constitution and bodily strength without which no pleasure of life can be properly enjoyed or its pains borne without injury to the constitution. Even in countries which are far more advanced in civilisation than India a thousand improper and superstitious practices are resorted to by ignorant women in the misery which materially injure the physical constitution of their tender charge. How much aggravated must be the baneful effects of injudicious interference in a society where ignorance has a greater predominance and from whence the light of knowledge is shut out even by religious prejudice. It is an admitted fact that our countrymen are generally a weaker race than the inhabitants of other parts of the world ; but the cause of this physical inferiority has not yet been clearly developed. It is not owing to climate ; for men of other religions born in the same climate are free from this physical weakness. It is therefore to be hoped that the defect is not so radical that it may not in time be rectified by attending to the physical education of the child. Much more might be said to point out the importance of physical education. But we shall content ourselves with the few observation we have made.

Now what is to be the remedy of all these evils ? Evidently female education. When education penetrates into their apartments we may look for the radical reform of a thousand evils which now resist the utmost efforts of the school master that is abroad. The physical and moral education of a people must in a great measure depend on the education of the women of whom these important charges necessarily depend.

We have hitherto considered the importance of female education only as connected with a proper education of man. But independently of this consideration the subject is in itself of too great an importance to be lost sight of or be allowed to lay dormant without being agitated from time to time.

The emancipation of the fair sex from the degrading thralldom of ignorance and superstition is surely a subject of the last importance, and ought to occupy a prominent place in the attention of every friend to India.

[*Reformer*, 4 August, 1833]

( 3 )

Sir,

Your unabated exertion for Native melioration inclines me to write these few lines which you will greatly oblige by inserting in your paper.

Though the introduction of Female education in the Native Community of India has repeatedly been demanded and its utility has repeatedly been shown by many of your correspondents as well as by yourself for a long time, I am at a loss to find, that at this golden period of the march of intellect no friend of Native education nor any individual either public or private, influential or uninfluential, has yet come forward to take an active part in furthering the cause.

It has I doubt not, been generally granted and emphatically declared by all, that if there be any thing that may reform a country, it is generally granted and it is general education, without which it is impossible to meliorate the degraded condition of any nation long plunged in ignorance. But where is the exercise of the maximum? I see on the contrary a cold apathy prevailing throughout the country to its practical operation.

The inconvenience that we feel for want of education in the Female Society of India, is inexpressible, and needs but very little explanation to make it a conspicuous. What is the cause of frequent domestic broils in the families that we

often encounter with ? and whence is the difficulty that we experience in extinguishing the fire of rage, when it is once influenced and inflamed in them ? and besides why do we observe in the Female Society of India, so many malicious and envious women. Though envy is the quality of women in general, yet it assumes a very prominent feature in the female society in India. Nothing but ignorance, the gross ignorance, the abominable ignorance, is the cause of all these mischievous consequences. I have witnessed myself, Mr. Editor, that it is impossible for any man to convince them of the truth of anything, or persuade them to virtue and to make them obedient to the duties they owe to their husbands by the virtue of sacred marriage. And further their godly reverence to gold creates frequent breach of peace between the wife and husband; whose income being inadequate to meet his family expenses, cannot fulfil her desire by furnishing her with all her fancy ornaments thus the Females of India being deprived of all the advantages of education, become subject to the vices which render their lives unhappy forever.

The objections that are often brought forward by my countrymen in opposition to female education in the Native Community of India are of very trivial and ludicrous nature, which will only excite laughter and pity in the reflecting world, they say that learning instead of doing them any good will be instrumental to cause their ruin, viz. it will amply contribute to prostitution by enabling them to communicate with the world by means of letters. Alas ! alas ! that human beings created superior to all creatures by his maker, blessed with the faculties of reason will dream such of an idea. I pity and deplore the condition of those, who entertain such a mean opinion of learning, and who in supposition of some ideal evils, neglect the cultivation of sacred knowledge ? Who is there under the sun so dull and ignorant, that will deny that education properly directed will produce virtuous effect ? Are they not aware of the moral strength it will produce in the mind of their daughters and wives, which will always be ready to revolt againts every vicious feeling and evil



propensities consequence to the weakness of the sex ? Do they not daily witness the virtuous effect of learning in some remote quarters of the globe ? If not I refer them to the page of history, ancient and modern. In the conclusion, I beg, Mr Editor, all your readers whether of rank or fortune, of talent or benevolence to take the matter into their serious consideration and show its practicability by examples. Though It is impossible to adopt any public measure at once to bring it into practical operation by establishing any institution for the alledged purpose, yet I presume, Mr. Editor, that it would be most convenient and expedient way to contrive it first in private ; and in order to encourage and excite candidates to report on all the particular methods adopted for the execution of the object, through the medium of periodicals, which will give instructions to the world, who have a desire to accomplish their female generations with mental ornaments will enable them to judge which of them is the most expedient mode of education adopted to the female education.

19th September, 1833.

I remain, dear Sir, yours truly

Lunar Complexion.

[*Reformer*, 13 October, 1833]

( 4 )

My Dear Sir,

Surrounded as I am every where by Hindoos, once they pride of Asia, for their Antiquity riches, as well as learning of which they are now wholly deprived by the unmerciful hands of ignorance, who now stands triumphant on the coasts of India, I must not neglect the least opportunity to do good to them by any means possible. But what good can I do

them in their desperate condition ? How shall I benefit my dear and beloved countrymen ? What benefit can they reap from my feeble power and weak imagination ? And what means are included within my limited power ? The answer should be—the Press. The Press should be the first and the final means I can have recourse to. It is that great and unrivalled encourager of learning, which gives many a nation its freedom from the tyrannizing powers of its sovereigns, and 'vile superstitions' ; turns the fabric of over ruling tyranny, both physical and mental and makes it bow down before the humble gates of national independence, and the blazing portals of truth—evervictorious truth ! It is that which, a few days ago, liberated the Hindoos from the oppressive power of a 'horrible custom'—the burning of Hindoo widows, called by way of eminence suttee.

It was the mediation, the liberality and the sympathy felt for his subjects, that led Lord William Bentinck, to threaten the advocates of suttee, with an open and shining dagger, the very blaze, not the execution of which, baffled and defeated all the efforts, sanguinary efforts, of them, conjoined. It is the Press where I wish occasionally to send some few lines of mine to give them, at least, a idea of their eminent danger, proceeding from some of their absurd customs and the remedies they have hitherto thought proper will ever and ever remain in contrariety and mimical to the purpose, so long as their absurdities have any influence upon the minds of their victories, or in other words, till they are rooted out and banished from the coasts of India.

My last essay was—'on the distinction of castes and the evil consequences that proceed from such a distinction'. My present one is "On Female Education" the neglect of which creates, if I mistake not a havoc of intestine war and wordy blooshed.

I lay down these essays before the public, with a sincere heart of benefiting India. But alas ! as I have already said, it is not in me where the Hindoos will look for succour. Neither can the British Govt. relieve them from this distress;

since properly speaking they cannot interfere with these things. The Hindoos have given a tincture of religion in all their actions manners and customs. It should therefore be a matter, almost next to impossibility, to try to extricate them from such things as these,—I mean their customs. History is rather dumb in this respect. For not a single history of any nation, existing upon the face of the earth, has ever exemplified, that the customs of any people have been improved or changed, as civilisation rolled in her carrier through the place they inhabit. Their manner and mode of living, their choice of good things in preference of bad ones, have, no doubt, been bettered ; and of this an abundance of proofs may be found in the annals of many nations. The present state of England and almost of all the European nations, compared with the anicent, uncivilised and barbarous age of the Druids and the Pope are singular proofs of this. But as for their costume ever refined by the course of civilisation, by which I mean, their dresses, their mode of marrying, Etc. not a single page of history bears testimony. I should therefore earnestly entreat the wealthy, and at the same time enlightened baboos (for a line of demarcation between the mere wealthy, and the rich and enlightened, as this expression is now in vogue must always be in view) to show to the poor natives of Hindoostan, examples I say repeated and reiterated examples of this kind, whereby they may see a happy day and happy hour so long expected by every friend to India.

Nature has distributed her blessings equally to her creatures. By these blessings I mean their external senses and internal faculties ; these being absolutely necessary ingredients for the perfection of such a creature as Human Being Providence, moreover, has no ordained that it is not in man only where his blessings visibly appear, but also in woman. Then arises the question, why has the deity creates mankind ? If so serve him, had been his object ; is it then that the man only should undergo the punishment, or be rewarded with a crown of everlasting joy, and not the woman ? Surely this

is not a logical inference. As surely not. But experience seems to contradict this assertion. For we find daily and hourly, that though man is sitting idly in his closet and spending his time apparently in mere nothing, still his thoughts are so elevated his plans so effectual, and his schemes so very wonderfully mazy that no woman (I now chiefly talk of Hindoo females) ventures to approach him far from keeping his company. Then I ask such of my Hindoo friends who are averse to female education, why is this order of creatures ? Why does she remain in a mere round of eating, drinking and sleeping ? Why does she, I ask again, remain dormant and insipid, without ever feeling the blessings of education which is must-be-fellow companion, Man, boasts of ? Is it that the woman is created for a mere show or display of her charms ? Or is she created to satisfy the vicious purposes of man, who often imputes her as bone to commit crime, but does not think that he himself is the author, he also the seducer ? I should here repeat the couplet.

The faults of our neighbours with freedom we blame.

But tax not ourselves, tho' we practise the same or is she created, I should ask this loudly to all the ignorant classes of the Hindoos in general, is she created only to cook for her family instead of being the ornament of it ? Undoubtedly this is a paradoxical opinion in our quarters. Mr. Editor, you being an enlightened Hindoo must not feel it so very hard, so very oppressing, as we your poor countrymen do.

The deity then must had some nobler objects in view in the creation of the female sex ? And we have some respects strong grounds to say so. And the objects around plainly convince us that providence in creating any one of them had not any one individual..... in view, but several others. Is it that the grass is created for the beast alone ? Is it that the stars and the heavenly bodies are created for us alone ? Is it that the sun is created to give light to our sphere alone ? No ; surely not. The advantages are multifarious which the

weak mind of man cannot comprehend, because his knowledge of things around, is but very limited.

For what is this terraqueous ball in comparison to the whole universe, but a grain of sand on the face of the earth ? It should therefore be a gross presumption in man even to suppose, that woman is created for mere show or cookery as to denounce that the whole universe is subservient to him ;—is created for his use alone, and that he is the sole master and freeholder of it. Had that really been the case, his pride would have known no limit, his presumption no extent and his obstinacy no horizon. Already man, too contemptible to be compared with the other magnificent works of nature, knows no boundary of his presumption,—he leads astray to a boundless deep of theories and speculations ? Taking this for granted, denying the existence of this and that utterly forgetting what he is in the face of this simple machine the earth—much more in the complex machinery of the universe.

Woman then, for we must naturally come to this conclusion, is not by nature, subservient to the wishes of man, but his compeer, his companion, his fellow-labourer. She must not therefore, I urgently beg of all my countrymen be treated so contemptuously as she was in the time of our forefathers. Society is the source, the fountain of all our knowledge. It is to society, Calcutta owes her present prosperity. There we can see the conduct, the manners, and the customs of several persons, residing in the different parts of the globe. We should choose the examples and glean the morals from the conduct of others, not even birds and beasts excepting as gay says in these lines.

'The daily labours of the bee  
Awake my soul to industry ;  
Who can observe the careful art,  
And not provide for future want ?  
My dog ( the trusties of his kind )  
Which gratitude inflames my mind.



I mark his true, his faithful way,  
 And in my service copy tray,  
 In constancy and nuptial love,  
 I learn my duty from the dove  
 The hen who from the chilly air,  
 With pious wing protects her care ;  
 And every fowl that flies at large,  
 Instruct me in a parents' charge.  
 —He who studies natures law  
 From certain truth his maximum draws  
 And thou without one school suffice,  
 To make men moral, good and wise.

The views of our forefathers were confined chiefly in their own quarters. But we, who live in such an age, which the press with all its learned correspondents, this discoveries of succeeding ages adorn and beautify, must not indulge in their rude, rough and semi-barbarous notions and customs ; particularly in the subject I am treating in which we deprive as it were one of her inherent qualities. Woman then (I must repeat over, louder and louder till I meet with success, and desire you, Mr. Editor and all your correspondents to write on the subject) must have an equal claim to the blessings of education with man, her co-adjutor. And she must not be neglected, to the disgrace of this enlightened nation but taken care of with as much prudence and caution as possible. Leave not therefore, I beg of my Hindoo friends leave not the pages of history unspoken in favour of our miserable females. But leave... I beseech you, to posterity as a distinguished era in the annals of India, when the long neglected female kind was emancipated from slavery and unshakled from the chains of ignorance. Glory should be to your age ; glory to you my enlightened brethren. Since when ages after ages had rolled none had taken care of his, you raised your heads from the burning lake as it were, and claimed your Presidency in heaven trumpet shall sound your pain and bards sing of

you. All the nations will hail the epoch, will hail the era, will hail the time with an intensive feeling of joy and you in the midst of them all glorify yourselves as emancipators as it were, of the long neglected Hindoo females. This is all what I have to say on female education.

Now to the objections. Persons are wont to say that wherever a woman is educated, she defeats our purpose ; that is instead of leading a good and virtuous life she drags a shameful and abominable one.

With such objections as these, I should thus proceed. What do you mean gentlemen by education ? Do you call him or her educated who has learned to spell and to join some few words by means of some connectives, in the form of a sentence ; though even in that all, the grammatical perspecuity and precision are wanting ? Can you produce any instance even appealing to the history of any nation you chose, wherein a woman educated (mind, observe strictly the term educated) has fallen unexpectedly into the gulf of vice ? Do so if you can, I challenge you. But if you fail silence and not interruption, should be your only portion.

"Oh judgment ! thou art fled to  
brutish beasts  
And men have lost their reason !"

Having thus repeated the lines of Shakespeare I bid adieu to this dear subject, leaving it Mr. Ed. at the same time under your decision.

Give to these few lines an early insertion and thus oblige.

I am Sir, yours faithfully

Bangbazar, Oct. 9, 1833.

Zarian.

[ *Reformer*, 17 November, 1833 ]

( 5 )

Dear Mr. Editor,

Then you say in opposition of my letter that Education applied to the people of India may be considered in two different senses viz. in the ample sense of the word there is moral — we may even say a physical education which requires not the aid of any foreign language. In another sense of the word education would mean a knowledge of letters and particularly of the English literature and say that the evils complained of in my letter depend on the training of the mind in the infant state and may be avoided by a proper education which may be imparted in any language and even without the use of letters. This education therefore our countrymen are prepared to impart to their daughters even before letters or the English language be generally introduced in female society. Now in the first place I beg to ask you my good Sir, what is the general acceptation of the phrase Female Education in the Hindoo community, and what idea does it convey ? Is it not generally meant teaching the Native females the art of reading and writing ? and thereby impart more education under which deficiency they have been labouring for a so considerable a length of time and which has rendered them proverbially ignorant, you say that the evils complained of in my letter may be avoided by proper education which may be imparted in any language certainly they can be avoided by proper education and be imparted in any language, who will deny that ? I do not say in any part of my letter that this or that language should be inculcated, for its success, and what makes you speak so much about foreign languages ; all these bare assertions only betray your antipathy towards some radical truths which have at least a collateral connection to christianity became the christian females are mostly educated. Your comtee/prary of the Enquirer observes very well in remarking on this subject 'like the students of sceptical school raise doubts on every subject' upon my word, Mr. Editor I am not influenced by any party

feeling or any religious prejudice but by truth alone to differ my opinion on any subject-truth is truth every where she must not be overlooked and disregarded for her having a connection to any certain system of religion which is foreign to ones own. But it excites my pity and astonishment when sitting on your editorial chair you say, that the education which is demanded by me, can be imparted without the knowledge of letters and recommend physical education in its stead ; so far I understand by the phrase physical education it is that kind of education which improves our bodily frame such as wrestling and walking in the morning etc. which is scarcely demanded by me, and from the tenor of your remarks it seems to bear another meaning viz. giving verbal instructions to the Native females. Indeed a gross mistake ; because though the mode of education which you propose may be considered as a part of education, yet it is not education at all without literary education, because how is it possible that minds unseasoned without the cultivation of literature will be susceptible of receiving any impression of the sublime truths of morality ; when they cannot comprehend their meaning and appreciate their value, what will the moral lectures and instructions be to them but idle jargons and nocturnal dreams, and further where is country that has been freed from the shackles of ignorance by this phantastical mode of physical education neither do we find any account in the annals of history, nor do we hear any oral tradition regarding in success ; in another part of your remark you say that the habits of frugality, temperence and chastity and other female virtues do not require the aid of letters, in answer to this I simply beg to ask you what then creates the difference between a civilised and uncivilised people, and it is not an undeniable truth that the more illiterate a nation, the more they are subject to all the vicious feelings, manners and customs, as for instance, let you take a comparative view of the earliest and present state of Great Britain, in its infant stage, it was but a theatre of all the vices imaginable when every vice made its appearance .....fullest

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light and acted its part completely on the stage ; to what cause may these dark and dismal scenes be ascribed ! Is it not owing to its long separation from the dark—dispelling lights of the literary sun ; and on the other hand observe from the commencement of the tenth century since Alfred the Great, the harbinger of the intellectual day, appeared in the West, with what progressive steps the nations of the western regions have reached the present perfection of civilisation in proportion to the gradual approach of the literary sun to its intellectual meridian ! And further let us take a retrospective view of our common mother India ; what had obtained her so much celebrity in point of civilisation in the rhymes of the poets, the annals of history and in the speculations of the philosophers of antiquity ? Why was she called paradise of the world ; what had gained her that celestial home. Nothing but the benign influence of literature raised her to the aggrandizement, and I conclude with judicious remark of an eminent author, that 'good laws are essential to good government, arts and science to the prosperity of a nation and learning and politeness to the perfection of human character.

I remain your's truly  
Lunar Complexion

[ *Reformer*, 15 December, 1833 ]

## “CONDITION OF THE HINDOO WOMEN”

### *Coolin Polygamy :*

In adverting to what the Reformer has said respecting the practice of Polygamy prevalent among the natives we must remind our intelligent countrymen, that to speculate upon the evils of this vice will not be sufficient to do away with it, if people that are guilty of it be received with impunity into society. That marriage is looked upon as a traffic by the Coolin Brahmins, as an evil the existence of which cannot be denied. Many many poor little creatures have suffered keenly from it, and if we but consider the enormity of the crime, we cannot entertain any doubts about the course we, as members of society, should pursue with respect to persons that recklessly marry a number of wives without fixing their affections on any. Such of our Hindoo friends as may have been rendered superior to the prejudices of the country, and who accordingly look upon polygamy as a vice should not forget that they can do much good by not indiscriminately and without reproof, receiving into their society, those persons who are in the habit of marrying many wives. If a number of persons be found giving good examples in this respect, and looking upon polygamy as a vice not only in theory but also in practice, we may have reasons to expect that a happy influence will be shed.

But what will entirely put an end to the practice must be something that will reach the heart. To touch that spring of all actions and to purify it that it may send forth happy and unmixed streams all round, must be the ultimate object with every humane persons since when that is once set right all other evils will vanish. By physical means enormities may be prevented ; but the entire eradication of moral evil must demand the working of a higher.....and the intervention of

a mightier hand. Such vices that insult humanity and disgust even men of the world, may be put a stop to by measures that touch the body . . . but the prevention of all crimes and the consummation of the perfection of our nature must always be reserved for nobler instruments. He that will get up and make a stir putting an end to moral evils by applying to government or any other such physical means, may succeed in doing.....with enormities; but he that will rise up burning..... a desire of seeing his countrymen reformed and regenerated, and use every means for the purpose of ensuring the purification of their hearts and thus drying up the very sources of moral evil, aims at the entire abolition of mal-practices, and if he succeeds through the mercy of Heaven, the best interests of men are provided for.

While we do not deprecate much the suggestions of the Reformer to his countrymen respecting the adoption of physical means for the prevention of polygamy, we must remind him that there is another field where he and many other labourers may work, slowly but surely.

Such an education that may elevate the understanding by stirring the mind with knowledge and sanctify the heart by the placing the person in such circumstances whereby he may expect the grace of God, must when afforded perfectly entirely change the state of society for the better. In this cause numbers of men, may therefore, be engaged with much advantage if caution be the watch word; and the fruits that will result from well directed and pious labours in such a field may be the consummation of all our desires. Let therefore, all real friends to India, bear ever in mind that by having recourse to such measures as may affect the heart in a desirable manner, they will be attacking the very citadel of thier enemies, and raising a batter against the very bulwarks of moral evils. One thing in particular is needful for the improvement of this country the inculcation of a spirit of humility and docility into the student that he may submit to whatever comes from of a

high and cease to wrangle about a point which may have been finally decided by the unerring voice of God.

—“*Enquirer*”

[ *Reformer*, 15th March, 1833 ]

[ To the Editor of the *Reformer* ]

Sir,

Having often been encouraged by your inserting to your paper my communications that are connected with the felicity of our country, I once more venture today before your readers a subject that will not fail to be interesting and which, I am apt to believe, will draw the attention of those who are concerned in the glorious cause of reformation and feel the degraded condition of their native land, which was for some years darkened by the clouds of ignorance and superstition, but which have now begun to disperse, and India is gradually emerging from that darkness by the light of knowledge diffused chiefly by the English literature. When we cast retrospective glance upon the condition of our countrymen a few years backward, we find there has been a very happy change since we find the Hindoos have been brough back from their primitive degraded rudeness to a high degree of civilisation and politeness. But when we cast our eyes upon the present state of the opposite sex we find them all sadly and miserably degraded, we find no one of the fair sex that has as yet been able to raise her head from that ever cursed gulf of superstition and idolatry in which they were originally sunk. Now Mr. Editor, I will endeavour to bring to your notice and necessarily to that of your numerous readers all those circumstances that have hitherto prevailed among the Hindoo Women and influenced their proceedings. The evils that arise from untimely marriages are of too flagrant a nature to be denied and therefore I will



give a laconic sketch of them. Our countrymen, generally give their daughters in marriages, so soon as they arrive at the age of six or seven and when they are utterly unacquainted with the object of marriage. Nay some fathers who are placed in a state of pecuniary affluence wait not even till this short space of time, and actually celebrate their daughters marriage, in their chaotic state without any consideration whatever of their choice, which must be considered in a moral point of view as the ground upon which the temple of happiness between husband and wife is built. We confess our inability to trace this prolific source of evil to its proper length. The wretched women of our country are not only doomed by their religious dogmas to live in a state of celibacy after the demise of their husbands, although their age permit them to marry, but they are to suffer incalculable number of austerities which have coloured national character, from time immemorial. The widows, in question, are religiously bound to fast several days in a month, besides these occasional hardships they are to observe abstinence in their daily food they are to take their rice once in the course of a whole day and night, with a little ghee weighing not more than a cowree and some other thing which are considered pure in a religious point of view. To what cause are we to attribute these things ? It is owing to nothing else but the want of that amiable friendship of human life which is sacred in every age. What I have alluded to is that the want of education in the fair domain of the female mind, and the old established customs, make them patient sufferers of these hardships and austerities. Are not also instances of infanticide frequently to be met within this part of the world ? Surely, but to trace the source whence this evil arises, we must acknowledge that the distinction of caste and ignorance of the women, are the two powerful causes that induce one women to perpetrate this heinous and horrible crime which disgraces and stigmatises human nature with infamy, it is a matter of regret that measures have not hitherto been taken by any friend of India to educate the female, except as I understand

that some female have been instituted by the missionaries where small portion of our country girls receive but partial and imperfect education. Mr. Editor, considering the temper of the times I find no remedy that will effect the removal of their evil from our country as the time is favourable to those who are situated aloof from the happy provinces of reformation. I hope that the Hindoos of the regenerated class will exert their utmost to advance the wishes for reformation. I hope that they will do every thing in their power to assist such a glorious undertaking as the emancipation of their native country from the thralldoms of superstition and idolatry. I hope that they will fear very little the thundering anathema for the bigots, and I hope that they will not be affected by the troubles they will have to undergo to raise their country to the paramount height of civilisation and politeness.

I am your's Etc.

Simlah, March 14, 1833,

R.

[ *Reformer*, 24th March, 1833]

*(Ed. comment on this letter)*

We have given insertion in another part to a letter under the signature of R. recommending the propriety of educating the females of this country. The writer has brought forward several instances to show the necessity of our doing so, and we fully concur with him in his opinion, knowing as we do that education has a great tendency to regulate our moral principles. To describe minutely the evils arising from the neglect of female education would be to occupy the time our readers with a recital of facts that must appear to them superfluous. We shall therefore content ourselves by saying that if God almighty created women for our happiness we are bound to educate them in such a manner as to make them useful in society ; for it must be admitted by all that human beings without education are little above the brute creation,

Applying this principle to our fair sex we would indeed be guilty of the most horrible crime if we neglected to cultivate understanding. What pleasure can we derive by associating with brutalised humanity, what advantage can we expect from our females if we do not civilise them ? We therefore trust our countrymen will leave off their old prejudices and educate their children in order to render them at least capable of thinking that they are not brutes but rational beings, and of appreciating the value of knowledge.

Our correspondent has also deprecated the unnatural custom of marrying the females of this country at a very early age. We leave the eradication of this abominable practice to the work of reformation the tide of which is already extending so rapidly that intine everything which is considered a reproach to our country will be swept away by its powerful torrent, and the whole fabric of superstition and its concomitant evils perish for ever.

[ *Reformer*, 24th March, 1833 ]

## KOOLIN SLAVE TRADE

[ To the Editor of the *Reformer* ]

Sir,

Much has been written on koolinism in the English as well Bengalee papers of this Presidency to show that it is highly detrimental to the peace and happiness of that class of people among whom it prevails. Nothing could have induced me to try my skill on a hackneyed point, but the melancholy truth that though koolinism is known to be enormous evil, it is left to luxuriate in the tears of its unhappy victims.

For a thorough extirpation of this most detestable custom it is necessary that there should be a diffusion of knowledge and intelligence among the caste of natives who practise and abuse it to the utmost extent. But whether in this most extraordinary and a anomalous case in Human manners, a Govt. has any right to interfere and prevent the bitter evils arising from thence by abolishing it, is a question in politics in which the dearest interests of people, their rights and privileges of a people.

The acknowledged duties of a Govt. is "to protect the persons and properties of men from the violence of men". These are its main objects, to effect which various ways have been devised and followed by various people with various successes. How far these ways were consistent with the inalienable rights of mankind, I do not mean to enquire ; but how far a Govt. is justified to interfere with the manners of its subjects in order to maintain the above mentioned duty.

I belive it is not a disputed point that so long as a man acts in a manner not to injure the property or rights of another man, he is not punishable by law that is by the Govt. ; but when he acts in a manner to injure the property or right of a man he is punishable by law. Now I will not stop to quarrel about the name of this action, it may be manner, or custom,

or an action stealing, and stealing is punishable by law—but when I see a person kill himself, I see that suicide is an act which hurts nobody tho' the example may be a bad one ; but are we for that partial evil to destroy, one of the first rights of mankind the right of thinking and acting. By this reasoning I may condemn the abolishing of the suttee—so far as women burn themselves of their own will ; but I justify it as the abolition of a most pernicious custom. When a person usurps the rights of his fellow creatures the Govt's duty is to come forward to secure the right of the injured person. It may be the custom, it may be the religious belief of the people to do that ; but the Govt's duty is to prevent it.

I would apply the above remarks to the subject koolin marriage. It may be said Sastras enjoin it (tho' in reality they do not) may be said that honour and nobility of the family are concerned and therefore they ...do it. These are not valid reasons .....If it can be proved that the parents of every koolin women when they betroth their daughter to a man who has numerous wives, who will scarcely visit her once in a year or who is aspiring in the moment of his exchanging the garland with her, to consummate the marriages do it with her free consent and will, then can I justify Govt. for stopping to abolish this custom of the Hindoos—other cases of the most flagrant violation of human rights committed with impunity the grossest and basest slave trade carried on under the eye and sanction of civilised and humane government. It will be said, that as fathers are vested with a discretionary power to direct the choice of their children, they have a right to direct the choice of their daughter to a man though may have a hundred wives else. I say, it is true, parents have a discretionary power vested in them over their children as they are the best guardians of their interests. But we must remember this power ceases when the child can think for himself in civilised countries in his 16 or his 20 year. In his minority the parents have no right to act in such a manner towards his child, even in the case of marriage I would doubt of the right of ..



the parent. But when under this indulgence the father not only marries her to another without her will but also to one who has already married a great number, even whose names or persons he does not recollect, but is obliged to keep note in his ledger book wives, this indulgence assumes criminal aspect and demands the correcting hand to authority. Suppose the case was reversed, the male-children of koolins were married to a woman who had many husbands how would your correspondent a cavalier who has written against the propriety of government's being vested with power to abolish koolin marriages have liked the case.

A Cavalier has threatened us with "being insured into innumerable evils" by investing Govt. with power to abolish the koolin marriages. From my above reasonings, it would appear that it would be the investiture of no new power to Govt. were we to petition it to stop koolins marriages. It is their duty as being bound to secure the rights of its subject to prevent this hitherto tolerated and inhuman usurpation of it. He says "the people among who, the custom of polygamy exists do not consider it to be vicious ; it is the ruler alone who take it in that light, and would it not the tyranny and oppression of the grossest nature to allow them the power of judging and forcing their subject to act against their conscience ? It may be a matter of conscience with some to steal, to murder, or to multiply (do not blush fair lady ! if any read the Reformer it is a matter of fact) or to multiply women of ill fame in his country by marrying one hundred wives and seeing them once in his life and Government should not prevent them for acting to the fullest extent according to their conscience," because far sooth it will be the invasion of his rights his freedom or conscience (iiii) will be violated. In the name of reason, of justice and the respected name of virtue I would ask any person who has common sense to what a conclusion do we arrive at !

I would not insult the understanding of the reader any more with "such precious logic" nor inform him of the direful prophecy of "a Cavalier" that the Government may one day

(if they are allowed to violate the right of koolin) (if they think it pernicious) abolish the use of the English language throughout the dominions. The evil of the existence of koolin polygamy in this country is an enormous evil, it is a prolific source of vice and prostitutions on the one hand and the most inhuman usurpation on the other, of the rights of a class of women, whose ignorance has precluded from complaining, and superstition has obliged, though reluctantly, to remain the patient and mournful victims of the avarice and credulity, or, the false notion of honour of their parents. It is the office of Government to redeem their truly deplorable situation, and bring that peace to their bosom they had not tasted for life ! It is the duty of those who perceive their unjust treatment vindicate it by a warm espousal of their cause by petitioning the Government to remove their bondage. Any lukewarmness in the cause of the defenceless daughters of India is really criminal ! They who sympathise with woman as the inseparable partner of man's joy and fears, they who have ever felt what is it to love, they who have marked the tears of a weeping beauty, and known how miserable it is not to be able to dash it away, will join with me in praying that the sorrows of India's daughter's be calmed for ever. As for you Mr. Editor, I have ever observed with the pleasure your calls to your countrymen for the removal of this barbarous and detestable custom. I wish I could tell to all who feel for a woman's heart

Do Thou Likewise.

March 5, 1833

Amicus

[ *Reformer*, 1st April, 1833 ]

## POLYGAMY

Sir,

Whilst I was persuing the contents of the Reformer sometime in February last, I felt much joy in finding an article regarding polygamy, which is indeed so interesting and important a matter discussed in your Editorial columns that I imagine it scarcely escaped the glance of your readers as well as their offer in due commendations and thanks for the laudable endeavours you are often kindly taking for the rectification of the wrong principles of our countrymen by diffusing reformation among them.

I really confess, that it is a great folly if a man of talents and virtue does not give his entire concurrence to the observations you have laid down consistantly to the doctrines prescribed by Munnoo relating to matrimonial ceremonies certainly it is a prejudice to religion, an injury to felicity and a disgrace to the nation in which most of our high classes of Brahmins have voluntarily participated by bringing the system of polygamy into use which if they strictly investigate, will be found wrong in every respect. The prevalence of such unpleasant and erroneous system among them, I evidently conclude, does not exist from the time of their ancestors, owing to their strict adherence to the laws of an ancient Rajah, who in order to regulate the mode of wedlock established new rules for every class of Hindoos, which I hear, commanded great respect and honour, and pointed out the distinction between the lowest and the highest among each of them. Polygamy I know very well is not a custom prevalent for all classes of Brahmins or at least for none but those who have now been concerned in it, and who cannot at once resist ; because they are doing solely for the preservance of the Kool which they have obtained in honour of the merits, virtues and faith of their ancestors, and have been successively in the enjoyment of the advantages derivable therefrom. It is not

advisable, therefore to reap the fruits (which afford an enjoyment as related) by making any wrong arrangement in the mode of their taking or giving females in marriage. Be that as it may, I need not amplify my communication by repeating here what you asserted in your periodical touching this subject but indeed I ought not to abstain from recommending and coinciding with your resolution, that as the Brahmins of our country are most celebrated among Hindoo tribes and as they are the sole-preceptors and professors of our religion, they ought principally to regulate their wrong methods. But however, so far as my experience enables me to ascertain I should not neglect letting you know for the public intimation ; that it being now a day of reformation and the people neglect no opportunity in improving these manners, customs and habits and of course whatever they discover, exceptionable to justice, morals, and religion, they are in the religious pursuit to rectify it gradually. Should you, giving credit to my assertions, survey with an impartial eye and sound judgement all the quarters wherein the system of polygamy has long been prevalent, you will, I doubt not, find that our Coolin Brahmins who are chief polygamists have now revised their mode of marrying plurally ; the number of espouses, they now take is surely less than what one of their situation formerly did ; as the Bungsus Brahmins, who are to give their daughters in marriage to the Coolins, have now become perfectly aware, that in so doing they would throw their female offsprings into the ocean of everlasting misery. They, therefore, are determined not to give their daughters to Coolins unless they (the Coolins) appear averse to the principles of polygamy.

There is another mode now practised among some of our Brahmins, which is neither consistent with the principles treated by Munnoo nor the laws established by the ancient Rajah concerning nuptial ceremony, and I regret to say that it escaped your attention to notice it for the public information and try to reform it. If you thoroughly examine, Mr. Editor, you will I fancy, find this system more prejudicial to religion,

felicity, and character. I am well acquainted with some of them, who are in the habit of exercising this system at the time of getting their daughters married and have learnt all the particulars, which I will now unfold for the public notice.

It has long been known, that a father, who is about to give his daughter in marriage, has often been in the habit of allying her to a suitable spouse presenting him whatever may be the dowry in estimation of the honour of the family he descended from, every other useful gifts due to him according to the circumstance of the father, but at present in according to the recent system he is to make a bargain with one that can give a certain sum of rupees, as dowry for his young daughter about three to five hundred according to the age and beauty of the bride. Dont you deem it, Mr. Editor more prejudicial to religion, happiness and credit, than polygamy according to the rules of Munnoo, because whoever sells his daughter in pretence of marriage does not only pollute himself but also his family, his neighbours, nay even his country. He the seller of his daughter specified reasons, that time being very critical and money being scarce he cannot allow his daughter to be taken genity, unless, paid for handsomely. I beg to know whether it is not necessary for a person who seeks to meliorate his country to try to rectify this irregularity of principles prevalently rising to ruin the... of religion and the source of happiness which depends on the unity of the people. Surely the poor classes of Brahmins are profoundly suffering grievances under the reign of such savage rule among themselves ; because they are unable to lay out a sum for their marriage and if they do it they deprive themselves of the means of their subsistence, they generally in order to become married, mortgage there Burmutre ( rent free ) lands and wed themselves by laying out money by this means and when having children and family their expenses become more then ordinary, they cannot remove their debts and are thus reduced to wretchedness. Now the marriage therefore is not an act of deriving felicity but the greatest miseries. May I crave Mr.



Editor, you will kindly insert this in your excellent periodical and notice the subject through your editorial pen, with a view that a reformation may take place in the mode of selling daughters, which will be the cause of relieving the poor Brahmins from being ruined after marriage ; and recommend also to the Editor of the Durpan to translate this in his periodical for the information of his readers, specially for the Editor of the Chundrika who, I suppose, is, as shut up in the chamber of religious society, blind on all such irregular modes now rising out in this country, owing to the inattention of those who ardently endeavour to preserve Hindoo religion, but taking rest in bed without ever awaking to check such irregularities as destroy the laws of religion.

A Hater of Irreligious  
Modes.

11th March, 1833

[ *Reformer*, 21st April, 1833 ]

Sir,

.....The subject which now I take the liberty to write upon is an important and at the same moment a very good one, because with its assistance the Koolin Brahmins or rather Koolin Kayastoes will not only know what are the faults and inconveniences that arise from marrying a great number of women.

—.....

The Koolin Brahmins who hold the first rank among the Brahmin tribes and all the Hindoo castes, either on account of ostentation or from the expectation of deriving more pleasure that they can by marrying one, many a number of women. They marry so many women at a time that their number is not less than 8 or 10, the doing of which not only destroys their principles, but on the other hand urges them to enter into a place which has no other power than that of doing bad to people, i.e. it cannot bestow upon them a thing which is

capable of doing good to themselves and others, but that which leads them to commit the following great faults viz. licentiousness, debauchery etc., way it keeps them in such a field of barbarism, ignorance and superstition that it requires a great difficulty to reform them from those vicious pursuits....

.....

The faults and danger that are derived from the Koolin Brahmins marrying a number of women are three, viz, first, that it makes them always live in a state of ignorance and babarism ; secondly, that it destroying their moral and good characters, makes them vicious ; thirdly, that it spoils both their principles and conscience ; fourthly, that it not only makes them fond of licentiousness, but on the contrary it also makes their wives unchaste on account of their being unable to make an intimate friendship and correspondence with all of them ; 5thly, that it makes them idle and at the same time dependent upon their affinity who for the fear of their marrying more than those they are already married to are obliged to support them ; sixthly, it is a greater evil than all the above mentioned, because it makes life without the possession of a thing which is called learning which had the power of distinguishing good and evil, right and wrong etc. which has the authority of doing good both to teacher and taught, which cannot be lost squandered away or stolen like wealth, which every rational being ought to have an account of its being a treasure of infinite and above estimated value, which makes capable of doing good to society which has the ability of making man of the earth and which is the only great thing that can make men virtuous, celebrated and famous in this word as well as that which is to come.

The benefits and the only ones which they derive marrying many women are that they satisfy themselves by the possession of a great many beautiful girls, whom they marry and acquire a great deal of money. But Mr. Editor to say the least, this I think is nothing but the marks of their stupidity and nonsense ; because do they not know and recollect that

the marrying of a number of women cause many infirmities both of mind and body ?

The Koolin Kayustoes...are so wicked and cunning, that they rather than the Koolin Brahmins, say that because by their marriage the father of the women whom they marry, are defended in the rank and honor of their Kool nay their caste, therefore they do so. But this is quite absurd and impossible for they do not marry many women with the above intention but with expectation of receiving large and enormous sums of money from the parents, and this is the case with almost all this Koolins I have seen. Again they have such a prejudice upon caste, that they pretend they do not eat boiled rice in a house of a man who is less respectable in caste than they, but such a resolution of theirs is nothing for no sooner they receive the sum of money which they demand from a person of lower rank for the reason of dining with him than they do so and praise them in the highest degree. Ah what stupid persons are those who do so ! for do they not know that both the taking and giving of bribes is a vicious action ? do they not know that the doing of it brings them in the 'net of flame disquiet and hatred ? does not their own conscience tell them that taking money from a person who is unable and who does not with pleasure pay it, is a heinous action ? and do they not know that it makes them guilty of an action which is committed against God ?

I think every man who is possessed of reasoning power, will no doubt say that it is impossible for any body to take anything from a person who is incapable of giving it to him, as it is known to every human-being that the same hand which has made men of high rank and wealth has also made these that are of low rank and poor.

Where-fore considering the faults and dangers of marrying many women to be more in comparison with those of the pleasures and benefits which it can give us, I think, it is proper for my part to say by delivering opinion against it, that I

think it is better and more justifiable for every body to marry a single woman rather than a number of women ; for from marrying only one we can mutually love each other instead of being favoured with the faults which are derived from marrying a great many.

Simlah, 11th April, 1833

—Rusticus.

[ *Reformer*, 5th May, 1833 ]

## MARRIAGE OF HINDOOS

The diverse improprieties and the absurdities that attend the subject which I am about to lay before the public thro' the medium of your paper, I am certain, will awake my countrymen from a perpetual lethergy and persuade them to alter mistaken notion which they have embraced and which is always bringing many evils to a family.

There is a certain system of marriage among the Hindoos, which is so very inconsistent with the principles of morality and in a manner so very shocking and detestable that at the end it produces nothing but evil effects.

The Hindoo boys and girls in the earlier part of their age and before they advance to any degree of knowledge are forced by the consent of their parents to join into wedlock, but the dangerous consequences that accompany it are innumerable—In the first place, if a husband be an illiterate and an imprudent man, how burthensome is it to the wife whose disposition is quite cultured and affable ; but on the contrary if the wife be unchaste and ungovernable, how likely is it to wound the feeling of her husband whose whole life passes away in sighing and mortification and instead of peace and harmony often prevails domestic altercations. The married party speak ill and treat with abhorrence their own parents who have been the cause of mediating and adopting such a junction between them. In the 2nd place it shews, that earlier the parties are joined into wedlock the sonner they are vitiated and their young minds are entangled in the insinuations of love. They are mistaken as to the loss under which they are ; they do not think of the Golden fruits of Education which they are deprived of, and they are far from the duties of a social life. These are the baneful effects that arise from an untimely marriage.

[ *Reformer*, 26th May, 1833 ]



## “THE EVILS OF HINDU SYSTEM OF MARRIAGE”

.....

While upon the point it is worth while to notice an important but melancholy feature of the question under discussion, Hindoo girls are marriageable when they are nine or ten years of age, a time when she has no idea of marriage. Now, if she happens to lose her husband after the nuptials have been celebrated then she must bid a farewell to all the pleasure of connubial life and to the world even, she must then drag on a continual life of misery no better than death itself, because a widow is prohibited in Hindoo sastras to marry a second husband. When I witness such a terrible instance of injustice and cruelty in the customs of my forefathers, I have not patience to hear anybody defend this conduct.

The poor girl leads a miserable life. Is it through her fault? Who is the author of her misery? If not she, then to whom should it be attributed? Is it to be attributed to the poor helpless girl or to her parents. The poor girl is in the first instance dragged to the altar by her merciless father she loses her husband by chance. The legislator of her country, the founder of her religion, and the stern voice of the authoritative customs of her countrymen decide that she is not to marry again without incurring disgrace and loss of honour. She reluctantly submits so far—as far marrying technically is concerned, but can she exposed, as she is to the assaults of men of all descriptions, and liable as her mind is to be easily deluded and betrayed, can she I ask in one case out of ten, rise superior to the treachery and guile of man and maintain her chastity inviolate? There are cases I admit, which are exceptions to this, but is or is not the general tendency of the exclusion of widows from second marriage to produce in the first instance misery—cruel—cruel misery and in the second vice, and prostitution of the lowest kinds. The conclusion

must be admitted the evil and malignant influence of such a custom must be felt deeply in society.

In conclusion my orthodox opponent requests me to follow and obey the manners and customs of our ancestors. A goodly request indeed ! He would not for a moment give himself upto the consideration whether those customs be absurd stupid—calculated to produce evil or engender bad feelings. He is like a man bound hand and foot and forced to believe whatever his ancestors, his priests, or his old grandmother tells him . . . . . It is a disgrace to this enlightened century to inculcate such bad principles. But we must wait to be rid of fools till the sun of learning should glow in the meridian of our country. The hearts of the bigoted Hindoos then will be enlightened and purified and they will not listen to such absurdities.

*Juvenis.*

[ *Reformer*, 6th October, 1833 ]

SELECTIONS FROM  
THE BENGAL SPECTATOR

*THE BENGAL SPECTATOR* : In October, 1841 members of S.A.G.K. and others, from a widely attended meeting in Calcutta formed a patriotic organisation called Deshahitai-shunee Subha. There they decided among other things to bring out a journal to advocate the rights of the natives. A year later in April, 1842 a bi-lingual monthly (Bengali and English) was brought out as their organ—*THE BENGAL SPECTATOR*. Subsequently, it became a fortnightly from September, 1842 and a weekly from February—March, 1843. The journal ceased to exist after November 20, 1843. Among the many interesting articles that appeared in the journal we have chosen in the present selection the proceedings of the Bengal British India Society and the famous Radhanauth Sikder case.

## ON THE FORMATION OF BENGAL BRITISH INDIA SOCIETY IN CALCUTTA, 1843 \*

On the evening of the 11th of January last, George Thompson, at the invitation of Baboo Ramgopal Ghosh, attended a meeting of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge held at the Hindoo College and when the business of the meeting was over, on being requested by the President Baboo Tarachand Chakrobortee to state any views he might entertain regarding the future welfare and success of the society, addressed the meeting to the following effect :—

Mr. President, Members of the society A. G. K. and if you allow me to say so, dear friends ! on rising to address you at the request of the chairman, I scarcely know how to discharge my duty, so many so new and so strong, are the emotions which struggle for utterance. For some years I have felt a deep and constantly growing interest in the conditions the prospect, and the destinies of the people of India. I have read of India and I have dreamed of India. I have written respecting India, and I have spoken in behalf of India. But

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\* George Thompson, the anti-slavery agitation leader of Britain came to Calcutta at the invitation of Dwarkanath Tagore, acting on behalf of the members of the S.A.G.K. He met the leading members of Young Bengal several times early in 1843, held protracted discussions and ultimately on April 20, 1843 the Bengal British India Society was formed in Calcutta with almost all the members of the S.A.G.K. and Thompson and his friends—this being in a sense the first political association in India. The full proceedings of all these discussions, the rules of the new Society and its first activities were reported in detail in *THE BENGAL SPECTATOR*, organ of the Young Bengal. (Ed.).

dreaming, or talking or writing, I have always had one wish present, to my mind, that I might see the country for myself, might mingle with its people so I do now, and through the knowledge acquired by travelling and observation, be able to be of more service to cause of my fellow-subjects here. At length I am permitted through the kindness of Divine providence, to stand upon your soil, and this evening I find myself in the midst of some of the most educated and enlightened of the natives of the country. So great do I esteem this privilege to be, that I can hardly believe that I am not even now enjoying a delightful dream rather than gazing upon a real scene. Allow me to say it is no feeling of mere curiosity that had prompted my visit to your shores. Still less a desire to advance my personal and worldly interests. My duties and engagements at home were of too important a nature to suffer me to abandon them even for short time, from any consideration less than a conviction that my future usefulness might be prompted by a knowledge of the actual state of things around you. I come out, therefore, not to gaze upon the splendour of your rivers, the sublimity of your mountain scattered monuments of former greatness. All these are objects of interest, and as they come in my way, I shall contemplate them with no ordinary regard. I come, however, to study the living population, and all other subjects, only in connection, with the present and future well-being of those who were created to possess and enjoy the riches and the splendour of this glorious region. I come as you know from a country which is the seat of the supreme Govt. under which you live. the fountain head of that authority which is exercised over you, the great theatre for the discussion of all questions relating to the fundamental principles of the British rule in India. I have long been anxious that the people of England should feel their responsibility to God for the manner in which this empire is governed. No amount of wisdom, benavolence, or justice in the delegated rulers of India can in my opinion absolve the great body of the people from their responsibility : In consequence



of their past ignorance, they have been quite incompetent to form a just opinion ; still more, to suggest remedies for existing evils. If enlightened, informed and interested in regard to Indian matters, they would be able to command, encouraged and support that which is just and beneficial and at the same-time to check abuses, to make salutary changes and to lay down broad and generous principles for the future administration of the Govt. It is of vital importance to you and to your country, that the apathy, difference and ignorance of the people of England should be removed. They make the Parliament that from tribunal to which you must appeal, from the East India Company, which is but the constituted medium through which India is governed in the name of the crown and the people of England. They are the power wielded on their behalf is equitably and beneficently exercised ; and this they cannot do while they are destitute of correct knowledge. I may be permitted to say that I have spared no pains to obtain the information that was within my reach in England, and you know that I made it my business to communicate what I conceived to be sound and accurate to my country men at large. I have even found the mass of the people at home willing to be taught, and ready to act. I have also found them anxious that the govt. of this country should be a just and benevolent one. They are willing to act when they shall be slightly instructed in their duty. They have no interest in the perpetuation of any of the social and political evils of this country. On the contrary, they are by degrees coming to the opinion, that those evils deprive both the people here and the population at home, of many great and inestimable advantages. I can assure you that I am followed to those shores, by the sympathies and best wishes of thousands who cherish a deep concern for your welfare. Judge them how delighted I must be, to have so early an opportunity of addressing so large a member of the native community of this city and to find myself in the midst of a S.A.G.K. I have gone through the printed transactional of this society and with much pleasure. They reminded me of

the days long past, when I belonged to similar societies in England ; and let me say for your encouragement that if I have since, in any measure been able to advance the cause of my oppressed fellowmen I attribute my ability to do so in no small degree, to the benefits I derived from my connection with those institutions. I have heard with regret, that your society has for some time been in a languishing condition. Allow me to suggest as a remedy for this state of thing, that you endeavour as far as practicable, to select topics which are of an interesting nature, and which appeal directly to the feelings and practical duties of men in this country. Within the scope you have allowed to yourselves, you will find many subjects of this nature, the elucidation and discussions of which will be highly beneficial to you in the various spheres you are called to fill. You will then be blending utility which instructions and making us aware of our ignorance, in inducing us to resort to the fountains of knowledge open to us and in enabling us to cultivate the art communicating to others, what we have ourselves acquired.

The object which brings me to this country is nearly allied to your own, in fact it is one and the same the acquisition of knowledge, I have heard of you and of your country by the hearing of the ear and I think I know something of your condition, peculiarities and wants, from the study of the best informed writers ; but these was not enough for one who sought to give an accurate representation of the real state of things I have therefore come hither to see and judge for myself, and as long as I remain, shall esteem it a duty and a privilege to cultivate the acquaintance of the native population that I may understand their feeling and their views. The only reward I seek for any efforts in your cause, is to see you qualifying yourselves to be hereafter the enlightened reindicators of the claims of your countrymen to the sympathy and support of all the lovers of moral and political justice in England.

(cheers)

This address from Mr. Thompson which was delivered with every appearance of the most perfect sincerity and ardent love for those before whom it was spoken, naturally awakened an eager desire to enjoy other and still more favourable opportunities. It is too well-known that the communication between the Europeans and native portions of society in this country, is of a very distant and limited character. There are many reasons for this. We cannot specify all, but may refer to a few. Our fellow subjects for Gr. Britain are with few and honourable exceptions, deeply imbued with that prejudice to which Mr. Thompson refers, in an address which will be subsequently given : a prejudice which practically, is as operation and influential, as the religious ordination of caste among the Hindoos, though not like that institution, commanded by religious law. This feeling, which is indirect opposition to the spirit and precepts of their own religion, leads the European part of the community to treat the native population with reserve and frequently with contumely ; or to adopt towards them airs of condescension and patronage, which cannot but be in the highest degree distasteful to intellect, high feeling and conscious equality. The rank, authority and power bestowed upon the civil, is another cause of separation and distance between the two parties. By all, save an enlightened few it is deemed necessary to the maintenance, of their proper dignity, to exact from the natives an amount of homage, which is altogether incompatible with cordial and familiar intercourse, while on the other hand, however, great the show of outward respect, there is a general want of confidence, on the part of the natives, in persons concerned with the govt. it being the general impression, that they are either unwilling to enter into their peculiar grievances, or so trammelled by their official connection, as to be unable to advocate measures of redress. It must be obvious that these reasons, if no other existed are of themselves sufficient while they last, to create a wide and effectual barrier to intimate association or cordial co-operation. On the contrary we think that those Europeans, who have set an example of freedom

from that English feelings of caste to which we have alluded who have to use a reference made to Mr. Thompson, "Thrown pride and prejudice aside", and have mingled with the intelligent and virtuous of our population, as equal and not as masters and superiors will be willing testimony to the confidence they have inspired, and gratitude they have obtained. Take as example the late lamented F. J. Shore, Robert Richards, col. Tod and Sir Charles Folees.

But to return to Mr. Thompson, everything connected with this gentleman was calculated to invest him with peculiar interest in the eyes of the Native community. He was known to have been the bold, untiring and successful champion to enslave millions in other parts of the world ; and to have braved danger and death, while advocating the cause of justice and humanity. He was known to be the friend of natives of India, the originator of a society for the spread of information on the subject of their wrongs and the dauntless vindicator of their rights at the East India House in London. At last he unexpectedly appeared on these shores, that he might perfect his knowledge of the true state of the country, that he might mingle with the objects of his sympathy, and their wants ; that he might be a witness of the working of a system, whose mechanism he had so often described ; in a word, that he might know India for himself, and read its condition in the living character of the people, and an actual survey of its provinces, he left wife children, connections, honourable labours amidst national applause, and his nativeland, to tread our soil, and cast himself as a friend, a brother, and fellow subject among us. Such a Missionary had never before appeared in India and it would have been strange indeed, if his arrival had awakened no emotions of hope and anxiety in the minds of those for whose benefit these labours had been performed, and these sacrifices made when therefore it was known that he would be present at the meeting of the S. A. G. K. a large number of our countrymen assembled to bid him welcome to the land he reached and to testify their respect for the motives that had



brought him among them. The favourable sentiments which Mr. Thompson had previously inspired were not weakened by the words he addressed to them when called upon by the president. These we shall leave, without comment to find their way to the hearts of our readers. We have said that Mr. Thompson's address was calculated to create a desire to hear still more from him respecting the object of his visit and his views in reference to the advancement, in future of the just interests of the Native community. To gratify this desire to some extent the Revd. K. M. Banerjee invited a party to meet Mr. Thompson at his house. The invitation was most readily accepted and on the occasion a considerable number attended.

At the meeting which took place at the Rev. K. M. Banerjee's house Mr. Thompson's remarks were of a more desultory nature than at those which took place subsequently. We cannot pretend to perfect accuracy in regard to the order in which the observations were made. We think we are warranted, however, in saying that the substance of them has been faithfully preserved : Mr. Thompson observed that he was anxious to assure those who did him the honor to meet him, that in coming among them he desired to arrogate to himself no abstract superiority. He trusted he was entirely destitute of that prejudice which led too many of his countrymen to regard the natives of the countries they had colonized or conquered with disdain. He (Mr. T.) had no such feeling. With the religious views which he held, he should consider that he committed an offence against the Being who is the maker of all men if he allowed country or complexion to make any difference in the treatment he pursued towards his fellow creatures. He respected men according to their virtue and intelligence, and judge them according to their circumstances in which they had been placed. If men were ignorant or degraded through the disadvantages of their birth, and their want of education, they were not therefore to be despised, but to be commiserated and befriended. Weakness had a sacred claim upon strength. Neither



Nations nor individuals were justified in taking advantage of the ignorance or helplessness of others. He frankly avowed his convictions that his countrymen had too often forgotten their duty, and had been more anxious to extend their territory and increase their wealth, than to promote the happiness and elevation of those whom they made subject to their sway. The time was coming, he trusted, when the duties which England owed to her dependencies would be better understood and better performed. He had done what he could to hasten the advent of this day. Some degree of justice had already been done to the inhabitants of the British colonies in Western world, and the advantages had been abundantly proved. Many ameliorations had also been effected in this country, but much still remained to be accomplished. Mr. Thompson then stated, that it was his wish that those about him should thoroughly understand the nature and origin of the interest he felt in this country's welfare, and that they might do so, he would give them a brief history of his past public life, untill the present time. This he considered the more necessary, because it was possible that these might be some misunderstanding regarding the kind of influence which he and others might be able to bring to bear upon the interests of India. The labours of his public life had been devoted to the object of enlightening the minds of men on the subjects of their duties, as members of the state. This was the more necessary in England seeing that all great measures of govt. were finally controlled by what was called public opinion. That is to say when the majority of the intelligent population consider measure to be just and necessary, either in regard to the people at home or the inhabitants of any of the British dependencies, they are able ultimately to obtain their wish by the influence of their opinions upon the representative Govt. of the country. Mr. Thompson then described the progress of several great questions in England, and showed how they finally triumphed over the most formidable opposition. As it had been with regard to other parts of the British dominions, so it would be in respect of

this country. A local Govt. wielding only a delegated authority, and that merely for brief period, might be either unable or unwilling to do what essentially necessary for the happiness of the people, but by awakening an interest in the minds of those who had the power to influence the proceedings of the imperial parliament, it was possible to effect the most important changes. Since no Cabinet could long resist the united and just demands of a free and intelligent own representatives in the Supreme Council of the Nation. Now, without the least degree wishing to bring discredit upon the intentions of the rulers of India, he had long thought it essential to the interest of the people of India, that their fellow subjects in England should cherish a more likely concern for their welfare. But this could not be effected, as long as a profound ignorance brooded over the affairs of India. It was to dispel ignorance, that he resolved some years ago to exert his voice and his pen. He believed he had not laboured in vain. Still he had found both difficult to bring his countrymen to believe that which he had collected from the best available sources. To remove this impediments as far might be, he had undertaken a voyage to India to see and judge to himself. Through books he had become familiar with the past history of the country. He had read the works of those who had described the country while under Govt. exclusively Hindoo. He had read various accounts of Mohamedan conquests, and their effects. He was familiar with the history of his own countrymen in these shores, and the characters and acts of the many celebrated men who had ruled here in various departments. He had studied the mechanism and operations of the British Indian Govt. and left no means untried of obtaining accurate information of the real conditions of the people under the British rule. But though he would venture to say that his statement, as respected principles and general measures could not be successfully controverted. Yet at the same time, he had always felt the necessity in his peculiar circumstances of possessing a personal acquaintance with the country. But there was another object he desired to

accomplish by his visit to India. It was to rouse the intelligent natives themselves, to sense of the necessity of becoming as far as they suffered under any that were removable by the legislation. He had no wish to inflame the minds of the multitude, or to spread a spirit of dissatisfaction. He sincerely deplored the dissolution, ( were it practicable ) of the present connection between the country and gr. Britain for this reason chiefly he thought the people of England were just awakening to a sense of their duty, and would thereafter if wise measures were adopted be induced lead to the most wise and beneficial results. But at the same time, he earnestly desired to see the intelligence and education of the Natives directed to patriotic ends and he knew no better method of serving their country, than that of collecting and carefully digesting information respecting the true state of things and sending that, firstly to the govt. here, and afterwards to the people of England. It might be said that concert and organisation would be required to effect this object. He believed they would, and therefore, he would have then consider whether they ought not to take measures to collect their information to a focus upon the various topics of interest around them, in order that they might be qualified to form a sound and accurate judgement, and to preserve agreement and unanimity among themselves. So much did he desire to see some men of their own nation stepping forward as a pioneer in their cause, that he could wish himself a Hindoo, that he might consecrate himself to the good of his countrymen and set an example of fearless and self denying devotion to their cause. But was it too much to suppose that many such men might be found ? In the belief that it was only necessary to point out the path of usefulness, to include many to pursue it, he was anxious to be as much as possible among those who felt generous concern for their country, that they might by degrees be brought to percieve, to what great ends they might labour in its service. If what he had said had proved interesting, he should be happy to enjoy other opportunities

of similar intercourse.

When the eloquent speaker had concluded his address, Baboo Dakhinaranjan Mookherjee adverting to the past misrule of India, the state of revenue and police under the present Govt. and then apathy shown by it to the interests of the people, expressed the grateful acknowledgements of the assembly to Mr. Thompson, for so zealously coming forward to advocate their cause.

At the second meeting of Hindu gentlemen held at Baboo Chandra Shikhur Deb's on the evening of Monday, Jan. 30th 1843, the Rajah Burroda Caunt Roy Bahadur in the chair and about 32 native gentlemen present, Mr. George Thompson opened the proceedings and spoke to the following effect :—

Mr. Thompson stated, at the commencement that it must be felt a deep interest in the welfare and improvement of the natives of India, and that it was that feeling solely, which had led him to visit the country. While here, he was desirous of communicating as often and as freely as possible with all classes of native population. Influenced by this desire, he had resolved to set apart one evening in every week, for a meeting with his native friends, at which there might be the most unreserved interchange of opinions on all matters connected with the present condition and future prospect of the country. At these meetings he should not attempt the delivery of lectures. His object was to draw forth remarks—to ask and answer question,—to promote, thought and enquiry—to inspire generous and patriotic emotions,—and if possible, to mark out paths of honourable usefulness. He did not wish these meetings to be considered secret ones. He had not in his heart a single wish or thought respecting India, which he was not prepared to avow in the most public manner. All that he had to say to his native friends, he was willing to say if it were convenient in the presence of his countrymen and the Govt. of the perfect union with the maintenance and perpetuity of the British Sway, because they were founded on justice and impartiality-principles,



he conceived most likely to attach the people to their rulers. He has no means to propose which were not pure and peaceful and constitutional. He could embark in no movement, dictated by a spirit of faction or promoted by improper agencies. Whatever objects be sought to gain (and they were all of a loyal and peaceful character) he sought to gain by the spread of knowledge by moral power; in a word though the influence of the intelligence and virtue of the people. For such ends, and in such a spirit, he earnestly desired to see a union among the educated and liberal minded natives of the city. He was anxious to see them aspiring after that knowledge and influence, which would render them of service to their less favoured brethren, and enable them to discharge the duties of enlightened subjects and citizens.

The co-operation of such a class of natives was much needed in England. If they had grievances themselves or if their countrymen around them had any, it should be their business to state them distinctly and accurately—to trace them to their causes, whether those existed in the law itself, or the manner of administering the law. When satisfied in their own minds what they had made out a case, they were fully warranted in laying it before the Govt. here and before the people and parliament of England. In doing this, they would greatly aid those who were their friends and much facilitate the progress of *improvements*. He would have then study carefully the character under which they were governed. They should be familiar with every clause. They should understand both the letter and the spirit of it. They were fully entitled to claim the benefit of every provision in their favour. If they could show that it had been neglected, or violated or frustrated, let them by all means do so. It was their duty to themselves, to their country and the hindrance to their developments. Let them, clearly point out the remedies for existing evils, and, they would render a great service to their distant friends, who were at present able to drive their information only from official sources. He would



remind them of the circumstances in which they were placed. Men in authority were either on the one hand firmly wedded to particular systems, or on the other, over-whelmed by the routine business of their official situations. Mercantilemen were already engaged in specific duties, which required the whole of their time and energies and though serving their cause by the diffusion of the blessing of education, were not at liberty to devote themselves to those general objects which were of so much importance in connection with the social improvement of the people. The intelligent natives therefore, should rely more upon themselves than they had hitherto done. They should show that they were really in earnest for the improvements of their own and their country's condition. Let them look to no party for effectual relief, independent of their exertions. Let them begin, at once to show the seeds of self improvement, while at the same time they availed themselves of every offer of assistances. Too much they could not wish, if what they wished they laboured to attain. In conclusion, (said Mr. Thompson) my desire is to see you who are intelligent and influential, rising to your own height and if you do so let me assure you, you will not lack friends. In every effort to improve yourselves you will aid the govt. you will bless your countrymen you will encourage and hold up the hands of the philanthropist, and prepare the way gradually but certainly for the attainment of a higher position than that you have hitherto occupied. For myself, permit me to say, I come among you as a friend and a brother, nor of you alone but of the humblest and poorest of your countrymen. I will aid you to the utmost extent of my ability while I am here. I will aid you when I am away, and to the end of my life, I will not cease to do all in my power to prove myself your friend and the advocate of justice to India.

After a conversation of some length during which the necessity of an organisation in this city to co-operate with the friends of British India was considered and in which Baboo Ramgopal Ghosh, and Dackinaranjan Mookerjee

took an active part, it was proposed by Baboo Dackinaranjan Mookerjee, seconded by Baboo Eeserchunder Ghosal and unanimously carried.

That it appeared expedient and necessary in the present state of this country, that a society should be formed to co-operate with the British Indian Govt., and the friends of our country in the Gr. Britain constitutional measures for the improvement of the condition of Hindustan.

Moved by Baboo Prasanna Coomer Mittra, seconded by Roy Muthurnath Chowdhury and unanimously carried, that a committee consisting of the following gentlemen with power to add to their number, be appointed to prepare a statement of the objects and plans of the proposed society to be submitted to a future meeting ; and that Baboo Dhukhinaranjan Mookerjee be convener of the committee and that there be a quorum.

Raja Burrodakant Roy Bahadur, Baboos, Roy Mothoornath Chowdhury, Nanda Lall Sing, Duckinaranjan Mookerjee, Ramdhone Ghosh, Ramgopal Ghosh, Tara Chand Chakrovarty, Chandrashikher Deb, Pearychand Mitter, Santcowry Datt.

Moved by Baboo Ramgopal Ghosh seconded by Baboo Nanda Lall Sing, and carried unanimously that Mr. George Thompson be requested to attend as often as may be in his power the meetings of the above committee and to give it the benefit of his council and expertence, and that this meeting be adjourned until Monday evening next.

At the third conversazione of Hindoo gentlemen held on Monday evening the 6th Feb. 1843 at the garden House of Baboo Sreekisen Sing, Maneektola. Present about two hundred natives including Mr. George Thompson. Nine natives sent their apologies for their absence.

Mr. Thompson addressed the meeting to the following effect :—

It affords me unusual pleasure to find myself this evening in the presence of so large number of native gentlemen.

The increase of our numbers speaks well for the growing interest felt in the object which brings us together. I trust I am justified in assuming that in coming here, you are influenced, less by love of novelty and a desire to hear what I may be able to say, than by a wish to prove of use to your country; a country whose welfare is one of the dearest objects of my existence. I am more thankful than I can tell you, for these opportunities with some of the most intelligent of the natives of this country. I am glad that, though ignorant of your Vernacular language, most of you are able to comprehend me while addressing you in my own. All must, I think be aware of the character in which we meet, and the objects we seek to promote. We meet as the loyal and peaceable, yet sincere and earnest friends of India.

Our object is to enquire how we may by individual exertion, or by the combination of our energies, be of service to the real and lasting interests of the people of this vast empire. Perhaps there is not one among us presumptuous enough to think, that he is qualified by talents or by circumstances to be of extensive use to India, without the co-operation of others. But though isolated and unaided we can do little, yet by the power of voluntary association and well directed general effort, we may do much. My aim in coming amongst you is to set a great and glorious object before you. An object worth living for and worthy of all the labour you can perform, and all the study you can bestow upon it. Having done this, I wish to incite you to individual exertion in the attainment of those qualification, the possession of which is indispensable to the right performance of your duties. If I can succeed in doing this, I desire next to see you bring your talents, experience and knowledge together, and by union and joint effort to make them tell successfully in aid of the cause set before you. Combination you know has achieved wonders. It has built bridges, constructed tunnels, floated navies, raised armies, founded cities and established as well as overthrown empire. Rocks and island are brought into

existence by the labours of the insects. Similar prodigies have been performed in the cause of philanthropy, more specially in recent years. The cause of India is to be promoted by the similar means. It is by bringing together men of various attainments, possessed of different degrees and kinds of information having access to different classes of the community and able therefore to sow the seed in different directions, that progress is made in a great cause. One man is able to advise another to execute. One can give time another money, another labour, another influence and thus the work proceeds. That you may gain the co-operation of all, let the principles you lay down, be of the broadest and most liberal character. Let no one feel himself excluded by his age, his circumstances, his station, his creed, or his caste. Your object being a national one and having respect to the removal of political grievances, and the advancement of general prosperity, you will be required to subscribe to no sentiments having a tendency to compromise you in regard to those peculiarities which you deem important and sacred. In the cause we are met to advocate there is room for all and occasion for all. Let the young come among you, for they will be the fathers of the next generation, and must in the course of nature occupy at no distant day, the place of those who are our present guides and preceptors in the young, too, you will find a more eager desire for knowledge and a greater freedom from prejudice, than in those whose occupations are numerous and whose opinions are fixed. The young are willing to work, and will under proper directions be found ardent and valuable auxiliaries. The more advanced in life will give you the benefit of their experience and knowledge of the world, and preserved you from rashness and precipitancy. The poor can best explain their own grievances, and the impediments which lie in the way of the bettering their conditions.

The dweller in the town will have opportunities of one kind and the dweller in the Moffussill opportunities of another kind. The merchant can enlighten you on one point, the



agriculturist on another and the official men on a third. One will give you the benefit of his practical experience and another the result of his reading and reflection. In a co-operative body, with an object embracing so many distinct matters of study as your own no one should arrogate to himself a knowledge of the entire subject, but defer on particular points to those whose peculiar means of information and mode of employment, have afforded them special opportunity of arriving at the truth. Mutual assistance implies mutual forbearance. You are bound together by the conviction, that union is desirable if not essential ; and hence there should be a determination to make mutual concessions where there is no compromise of principle demanded in order that you may move forward as a compact whole, and present a consolidated front, whenever you assume the position of opponents. A society of any considerable number will always comprise men of widely different tempers, and often opposite views on matters of detail. A disposition to yield on unimportant point, will ever smooth the way to the attainment of the more important end in view ; and he will have the largest share in the government, and the greatest amount of confidence, who most commands his feelings, and is most ready to respect the opinions, and make allowance for the prejudices of others. The true act of leading, is to be willing to be led and we gain our point soonest in things of importance, when we lay least stress upon those that are trivial. Pardon these remarks. In voluntary associations in what I may term philanthropic republics, where our influence is exclusively of a moral and intellectual kind, these principles will be found worthy of your consideration and adoption. By the liberality of your views and the expensiveness of your object, gain as many friends as you can ; and by charity and spirit of mutual accomodation keep the friends whom you so gain. So will you be strong, not only in the justice of your cause, but in that bond of good feeling which cements you together, and will render you invincible in the hour of trial. And believe me, it is good, very good to be connected with an object which brings us into communion



and friendly co-operation with our fellow men of different classes and station in life, and of opposite opinions upon other subjects. How often have been unspeakably thankful, that my identity with such an object, enabled me to become acquainted with persons whose characters and excellencies I might never otherwise have been able to discover. Be if you special care therefore, to avoid every occasion of discord keep yours hearts and minds steadily fixed upon your great object, your common country's good ; and let the consideration of the great end of your association ; banish every feeling that would disunite you, and by putting you asunder, prove injurious to the interests you have espoused. As a motive to labour in the cause of your country let me point out you to the benefit which will necessarily accrue and prosecute its duties with fidelity. To be of use to your country, you will find it indispensable to possess a knowledge of it. What is the end at which you aim ? Is it not to represent fully, fairly and impartially, the condition and claims of the various classes of your countrymen ? Is it not to understand the nature, extent, and the cause of their grievances and to suggest appropriate and practicable remedies ? Well, then in order to be qualified to this, it must be obvious that you should possess a knowledge of your country's history ; for it will be disputed that many of the evils around us are of very ancient date and have had their origin under Govts. which existed. You should therefore be familiar with history of those governments. You should understand their principles and ascertain what influence they have exerted upon the character and destinies of the people. It is still more important, that you should rightly understand the true conditions of the country at the time when those important events transpired, which caused the sceptre of dominion to pass into the hands of the British. Unless you do this, you will not be able to distinguish between sins of omission and sins of commission on the part of the govt. You will not be able to separate the evils they have inflicted from those which were inherited from former Govt. Neither will you be able

to divide those which are capable of immediate correction, from those which can be removed only by a gradual course. But further ; you will find it both instructive and profitable to study the history of the rise, progress and consolidation of the British power in India. If you neglect this part of the subject, you will not discover the secret of our influence on the one hand and or of your country's weakness on the other. On the contrary by understanding the causes which led to our supremacy you will learn the value of intelligent patriotism, union, foresight, and political sagacity. You will learn too, what must eventually be the fate of a people ignorant, divided, debased, suspicious of one another, and destitute of that love of country, which is the surest safeguard of independence and the most powerful ingredient to the attainment of greatness. You should, besides, become familiar with the principles of your own Govt. You should know the nature and character of the progressive changes which it had undergone, and the means by which those changes have been brought about. By such a process you will understand, how future changes may be effected, and how the acts of the Govt. may be modified or controlled. Let me say also, that in your peculiar situation you should study the history of England, and obtain a knowledge of our constitution and form of Govt. ; as well as the genius and spirit of the British people. I need not tell you that England is the fountain head from which your benefits must flow. The charter under which you are governed is made in England. The men who rule you, through the power that charter gives them, come from England.

The monarch of these realm has her throne in England. The source of patronage is in England. The Board of Controll is in England. The East India company's directors are in England. And besides all these, and let me say above all these, and more powerful far than all these put together there is an enlightened people who with all their faults ( and I would be the last man to praise my country beyond its deserts ) have a strong sense of justice, a quick preception of what is right a generous feeling for

the helpless and oppressed and an energy of character which when displayed in a righteous cause, has always triumphed over every difficulty. Such are the people of England, their enemies themselves being judges. This country and this people you should know. I fear no dissolution of any subsisting ties, from the cultivation of the most intimate knowledge of the people of Gr. Britain. Judge not of our country by the acts of a few. Judge us rather by those deeds of universal charity, which have gained us an unsullied fame even at the ends of the earth. Our national power has been abused. Our honour too often tarnished — resources too, often prostituted — and other religion too often disgraced but the heart of England has not been turned from the love of justice, nor her arm paralyzed in the cause of the poor. But I return to India. Study your country's present condition. Its extent, its division, the diversified characteristics of its people, the changes which its institutions have undergone, and where and by what means its institutions have been subverted ; what system have been planted by the British Govt. their principles their defects and their excellences. Study to understand the chief wants of your country. Be able to specify them, and at the same time to show how they may be supplied. I have thus endeavoured to direct your minds to some of the subjects, which if you would serve India with wisdom and efficiency, you will do well to become familiar with. And let me ask if you can give your thoughts to such subjects without deriving benefit to yourselves at the same time, will not your minds be enlarged and strengthened by the very efforts you will find it necessary to make ? Do I not counsel you to take the surest method of purging your opinions from error and your hearts from prejudice ? Is not this the way to enable you to speak with confidence with authority and with effect ? Is not this the way to qualify yourselves to form a just judgement respecting the conduct of your rulers as well as your prospect of success in the cause you undertake ?

[ *Bengal Spectator*, March 1, 1843 ]

After Mr. Thompson had concluded his very eloquent published in our last Mr. Speede made some observations in support of his views.

Baboo Hrushunder Lahoree read a paper showing certain defects in courts of Judicature under the East India company, and suggesting the appointment of an agent in England on behalf of the people of India for the purpose of obtaining redress for their existing grievances.

Baboo Shayamachurn Bose also read a paper exhorting the audience to persevere in their present efforts for the welfare of their country and proposed the establishment of a periodical for advocating the case of the natives.

Baboo Duckinarunjan Mukerjea then stated that as the prospectus of the intended society was in the course of preparation he would suggest that the consideration of the proposals, severally made by the two speakers, he deferred until the prospectus be submitted to a future meeting. Baboo Ganendermohun Tagore entreated the assembly to persevere in their endeavours to serve the cause of India, and exposed some of the abuses of the Zemindary system and of the British Indian Administration.

Mr. Speede offered to advocate the cause of India through the 'Planters Journal', whereupon, at the motion of Baboo Tarachand Chucroburtie, seconded by Baboo Pearychand Mitra, a vote of thanks to Mr. Speede was passed.

Baboo Greesh Chunder Deb read a paper calling upon his country men not to suffer their zeal to be cooled in the great cause of their country.

Baboo Duckinarunjan Mukerjea proposed that this meeting record its sense of gratitude on behalf of themselves and their country men, to the former and present proprietors and conductors of the British Indian Press, for their zealous advocacy of the cause of injured justice in Hindustan, and made some observations in support of his proposals.

Mr. Thompson seconded the proposal, and it was passed



with unanimous acclamation. The meeting was then adjourned at 10-30 p.m.

At a meeting of the Hindu conversazions held at Baboo Sreekissen Sing's Garden, Maniktolla, on the 20th February 1943.

Baboo Chunder Saikher Deb in the Chair. Present about 200 natives and three European Gentlemen, including G. Thompson an G.T.F. Speede Esquires. After the Minutes of the last meeting had been read, Mr. G. Thompson addressed the assembly to the following effect.

My Dear Friends — I had intended to have taken a particular topic for discussion this evening, and had intimated my purpose of so doing to some of my friends, who were with me this morning ; but subsequent consideration has led me to defer my intention until a future and more suitable occasion. I shall be able to account satisfactorily for this change, when I meet those friends in private. I hope, however that the observations I shall make, will not be found altogether destitute of your regard. I wish for the present, to lay before you some thoughts calculated to prepare you for the operation in which you may hereafter engage. We are at the present, but on the thereshold of our further work, and its most important, that should well consider the nature of the course we should persue. Permit me, therefore with the freedom I have already used, to throw before you few suggestions, which within a short time of my coming here have occured in my mind. You have so kindly listened to me on the occasion when I have affectionately tendered you my counsel, that I am led to believe you will not consure me to-night for persuing a similar path. With these few words of introduction, allow me to say, that I would respectfully suggest, that the profitableness, of these our weekly meetings might be increased, if a certain number of subject were selected and announced before hand for consideration. I have, no doubt that this course to be adopted, there are gentlemen already prepared to express their willingness to



bring certain topics under our special notice. From these, your committee if authorised to do so, might on conference with the parties, appoint a particular evening for the discussion of a given subject, and let the Members generally have due notice, that they might come to the meeting with a knowledge of the nature of the business, and thus have the opportunity of qualifying themselves before hand for taking a part in the proceedings. Many advantages would, I think, result from such a arrangement. In the first place, the gentlemen who commenced, would be prepared to make a general view of the question advertised, which, of course would be one with which his own mind was most familiar. He would give us the fruits of his reading, his experience, and his premeditation. He would arrange his facts, mature his arguments, and state with clearness the conclusions to be drawn from them. Others, according to their opportunities, would give us the benefits of their perhaps more limited knowledge, while at the same time, every thing advanced would be liable to connection if any respect unsound or erroneous. In the second place, such a course would have a tendency to improve the members in the cultivation of the rules of literary composition. Their papers would be subjected to candid and friendly criticism, in respect of method, style argument deduction, and many other particulars. The essay-list too, would be led to right estimate of the amount of information he possessed, as it would be deemed essential that he should support every assertion, by a reference to indisputable facts and the most convincing evidence. Where he discovered himself deficient, he would be compelled to have recourse to the means of acquiring accurate knowledge, and thus his own mind would increase its stores, while at the same time he would be enabled to benefit others, by communicating the result of his personal studies knowing that his productions would undergo examination and comparison, he would select medals of admitted excellence and superiority, and by patient effort would purify his style from everything exceptionable and useless. As he advanced, his

ability to analyse evidence, to reason up on facts and to form just conclusions would increase. The persons attending in the first place as hearers, would afterwards have the right of speaking, and be entitled to point out any fallacy, to contradict any assertion, or to add nothing in the shape of additional illustration or proof. By this process a most valuable opportunity would be enjoyed, of cultivating the art of public speaking. It is very far from my wish to encourage a mere love of declamation. Volubility is not eloquence, nor does confidence in the speaker. Always produce conviction in the hearer. By the art of public speaking I mean the power of communicating our thoughts to others in appropriate language and with the most effective delivery. This art, it must be allowed is one of the highest importance when cultivated to perfection, it enables us to convey in the most pleasing and persuasive manner, the knowledge, which we have derived to others who possess not that knowledge when exerted in a good cause, it is one of the most valuable acquirements and may be turned to the best of purpose. Much thought, much reading and study, a thorough knowledge of the subject and high degree of mental discipline, and a familiar acquaintance with the world, are essential to the world, are essential to the acquirement of excellence in this department of usefulness. By proper exercise, in meeting like this, this most enviable faculty would be acquired. The time would be by degrees become selfpossessed and assured. The practiced, expert and ready. The incoherent, connected and intelligible. Those who took no part in our proceedings would at least be instructed and thus all would in a greater or lesser degree be benefited. But other and higher advantages would be gained by such meetings. All the topics you discussed, would stand related to present or future interests of your country, a country dear to you—a country, of unequalled interest in the eyes of all the world—a country, linked politically and commercially, to one of the most influential and enterprising nation in existence, a country which besides having hundred and forty millions of children

of its own, is capable of exercising a decisive influence over a region containing more than half the human race, and seems intended by providence to be hereafter the dispenser of light and knowledge over the whole. Whenever you come together, this thought would be present to your mind. "Of five hundred millions of the human race, we are the most favoured and therefore most responsible of all the inhabitants of Asia, we are only ones thus accustomed to assemble together, and discuss the subjects connected with their own Government, and happiness, and future political well being. Let us not then abuse our glorious privilege, let us not think light of it, let us neglect it. Let us thank God that what we are, and let us tremble lest the light that is in us become darkness, or we use it, only to mislead" There are those I know, and I lament to know it, who while they profess to be the friends of you and your country, affect to despise your thirst for knowledge, your aspirations after better things your yearnings to be useful to the wretched and ignorant around you. Care not for the opposition of such. Fear not their power of ridicule. Take no trouble to answer their abuse. Be anxious, only that you do not deserve it. Lose no time in answering attacks upon your motives, or false charges restricting your conduct. You have other work to do, and if you do it faithfully, the day will come, when your deeds will be made manifest and the ribald invectives of unjust accusers, will be exchanged for the grateful commendations of all wise men.

Some are standing from you, from a fear, that your resolutions may not last, or that your act may justify the epithets that have been heaped upon you. I do not think such a course the wisest or the most generous one. I think it would be for better to come amongst you, and let you have the benefit of superior counsel, and longer experience. But it is so, and I am, therefore, the more anxious, that you should stand firm in hour of your probation, when so many eyes are upon you—That you should not cause your good to be evil tokens of that you should demonstrate that you are able to

stand alone, though at the same time you desire all the strength that others by their countenance and co-operation might render. If you do this you will live down prejudice, you will silence ridicule, you will exort admiration you will increase in power, and you will achieve success ; and, when you are at last successful, you will not lack patrons or applauders. I know, from my own experience, how difficult it is to keep the mind steady to the completion of subjects which are of the greatest magnitude and importance, in the absence of any strong motive, in the form of a definite object. There must be some powerful stimulus to read much, and study deeply, and observe philosophically and accurately.

A great effort requires a great cause. The river requires a boat, the mariner steers for a destined haven—the husband man sows for the harvest—the combatant struggles for victory—the author reads, that he may afterwards write—the statesman studies politics, that he may here after distinguish himself in the senate ; and you my friends, if you would rise superior to the ordinary temptations of youth, and the peculiar circumstances by which you, as the natives of India, are surrounded, must have an object before you, and one sufficiently commending to attract your attention and call forth your energies. You must also have an education. There are those who remind me of the fond mother, who told the tutor of her son not to let the boy go near the water, until he was able to swim.

They expect a race of patriots to appear in India, each armed at all points like minerva, when she came forth from the brain of Jove. Yet they forger that the age of miracles is past, that we live in world of facts and not of fables, that we must adopt the means of we would realize the end, and that to have a wise man, we must educate the youth. How stands the case regarding India. All the writers on the affairs of India are foreigners, India has foreign rulers, foreign councillors, foreign historians, foreign defamers, and I am sorry to say, is, obliged to have foreign advocate. Call a meeting at the Town Hall upon a question exclusively affecting



the welfare of the natives of India, and the speakers are foreigners. Let a cause require an agent in England, and though it be one altogether affecting the natives themselves, that agent must be foreigners. Ought it to be so? Your answer, no. Shall it continue to be so? I trust you will as emphatically answer, No. When will it be otherwise? When you the rising generation of this country, who are able to speak the language of your conquerors, and are already possessed, many of you, of no ordinary attainments in science, shall have devoted yourselves patiently and laboriously to the study of the great question affecting your country's condition, the causes of that condition, and its future prospects. When you shall have acquired the habit of thinking correctly, and writing powerfully, and speaking fluently upon those questions. But in order to learn, you must go to school. How have you acquired your present education? You all know, a few years ago, this city was overspread with darkness, and some of you came forth as the friends of education. They erected a college, they appointed teachers and professors. These instructors have done their duty. I may say, without any wish to flatter you, you have not been unworthy of their care. They have taught you to admire the wonder of the heavens, and you know the laws by which the planets role, and suns shine and tides ebb and flow. They have led you into the region of mind, and displayed to you the parts and powers of that mysterious principle within us by which we think, and reason, and judge, and rise from things were visible temporal, to things that are unseen and eternal.

"Soring through air to find the

Blest abord

The Empyrean place of the

Thundering God."

You have acquired much knowledge, and occupy a proud and enviable pre-eminence in the midst of your countrymen. But let me ask you what would been without the school, and the classes, and the teachers, without example and without



emulation, without the exhibition, and the examination, and the prizes, and the scholarships ? These have made you what you are. Some thing analogous to this system is requisite to enable any considerable number of those who have been so trained, to acquire another type of real service to their country. It is not to be supposed it never who intended that it should be that they should always be drudging in mathematical studies, or be ever looking into the blue heavens, or be continually writing essays upon scientific subjects, or ancient systems. These pursuits are uncongenial to, if not incompatible with these busy and everyday occupations in which you are likely to be engaged and especially while things remain as they are, and you possess no other kind of knowledge. Neither are these pursuits such as you are likely to follow, from a love of them, because they do not stand so intimately connected, as many others with the ordinary affairs of life. But bring the education you have acquired to the study of the world around you ; to the study of society as it now exists ; to the study of the moral and political causes or the evils which you see and lament, became familiar with the laws and institutions of your country ; the habits, feelings and occupations of your countrymen ; the trade, manufactures and commerce of India ; the soil, climates and productions of India ; the causes that repress agricultural improvement ; the system of taxation ; the modes of raising revenue by monopolies ; the administration of justice and police ; the state of your jails ; the prevalence of gang robberies ; the extent of national ignorance ; the causes of those of famines which devastate portions of the country, the reasons why men are so easily cajoled in a land like this, into taking a voyage to Moritius, to cultivate the sugar cane there instead of here, and to consign themselves to the equitable and merciful administration of men, who the other day, were among the most remorseless of all the slave holders on the face of the earth. Let me have the pleasure of taking you to England, without the trouble of your leaving India, let me unfold to you the mechanism of our Government there,

and show how from this moment you may be of use, and assist us and assist yourselves, in the attainment of some of that the most grand and patriotic object. Determine that so far as you are concerned, you will wipe off the reproach that has been cast upon you, that you have as good a government as you deserve to have. Submit to be called boys, but resolve that you will think like men. Bear to be accused of folly but determine at the same time that you will get wisdom. The crime of being young will beget rid of by degrees, and it is not one for which you are to blame, but for which you may justly say circumstances, over which you had no control are accountable, as you could not help being born since George the Fourth came to the throne, any more than your despisers can make virtue of being born under the reign of George the Third. You can afford to be called factious, as long as your actions are regulated solely by a desire to do good to your country, irrespective of who may or may not be in power. You can afford to be accused of treason, while your meetings are open, and your proceedings are published, and you are anxious that your motives should be known, your designs comprehended, and your movements tempered by the experience of all who will give you good advice and set you a good example. But at the same time, remember how possible it is for us to injure even a good cause by the excess of our zeal, 'tis not alone sufficient to have a good cause. 'Tis necessary that our measures should correspond with our object. The holier the end, the purer should be the means taken to compass it. We complain of injustice, let us then be 'just'. We complain of partiality and favouritism, let us then be free from the same vices. We complain of wrongs done to the poor and helpless, let us display an active, consistent and genuine sympathy with the wretched and necessitous. We complain of the failings of foreigners, let us be equally bold in censuring the shortcomings and misdeeds of our own countrymen. In what we write, and what we speak, let us make the truth and whole truth our object, and the care as well as the disease the subject of

our enquiry. If we pursue this course, how wide and honourable the field which lies before us ; how pure and unsullied will be the reputation we acquire ! our strength will consist in our uprightness our might in our mildness. To answer our opponents, we shall have but to point to our deeds, and these, be assured, will survive both the attacks that may be made upon us, as well as all that we could say in our defence. Let works, not words be the monument. We seek to establish and commemorate our claim to the name of Indian patriots, I trust you will soon have both a local habitation and a name in this city. A place of permanent resort for your meetings, an embodied form, a wise plan of operation and a suitable denomination. Till then, however, proceed as you have begun and apart from these meetings be unceasing in your exertion to qualify yourselves to be here after capable of taking rank amongst the benefactors of your country. Pardon me if I quote the advice contained in a book which I revere. "Add to your faith, courage ; and to courage, temperance ; and to temperance brotherly mindness, charity". Then shall India have cause to rejoice that you thus came together, and while her's is the benefit, your will be the reknown.

Baboo Kisserychand Mitra spoke in support of Mr. Thompson's suggestion and entreated the meeting not to be discouraged by any circumstances however unfavourable they might be.

Baboo Greeshchunder Ghosh read a paper supporting the object of the proposed society.

Baboo Ganendermohun Tagore read a paper, pointing out the evils resulting from the mode in which the zemindary system is conducted.

Mr. Speede then addressed the meeting in support of the views of Mr. Thompson and expressed his concurrence in the opinions of Baboo Ganendermohun Tagore and recommended the subjects which the Baboo had suggested.

Baboo Obhoychurn Bose then made a few remarks on the

expediency of pursuing a bold and uncompromising cause in the exposure of grievances.

Baboo Duckinarunjun Mookerjee in an animated speech deprecated the practise of using harsh and abusive epithets to the people of India as being unjust and unchristian like. He added that it was also illegal in support of which view he adverted to the 85th Clause of the Company's charter, admiring the liberal spirit with which it had originated.

The following subjects of enquiry were recommended ;

The state of police, by Mr. Speede :

The present condition of the cultivation of the soil, by Mr. Thompson.

The Meeting was adjourned at 11 'O'clock P. M.

[ *Bengal Spectator*, March 8, 1843 ]

Mr George Thompson and the Native conversations : —  
At a conversation of Native gentlemen held on the 27th ultimo at the garden house of Baboo Sriekissen Singh, present G. Thompson esq, Dr. Mount and an audience of Native gentlemen.

Mr. Thompson commenced by saying :—

At our last meeting, a friend present, acting on the suggestion I throw out, that we should on each occasion limit our enquiries to a particular subject, proposed that we should on this evening take into consideration the subject of Police. I am sorry that the gentleman is not with us this evening, to give us the benefit of his own experience on a matter of such high importance, and with which I dare say he is well acquainted. I shall endeavour, however imperfectly, to supply his lack of service, and I doubt not he will be ready on some future occasion to discharge for himself the duty which I now assume on his behalf.

I need not dwell upon the importance of the subject we



were about to consider. An efficient and pure administration of the Police, is essential to the order, safety and well beings of society. One of the very first objects of a government should be, to protect the population, in their persons and property ; providing for their security in their dwelling and on the highways, and affording them the means with as little a trouble, expense, and delay as possible, of obtaining redress in the event of suffering any molestation or injury. The police system too should be so administered, as to ensure prompt redress of any grievances suffered by the poor. The poor have fewer means of protecting themselves. They are less able to expend money in pursuing and prosecuting delinquents. To them generally speaking, time is money and if they have to sacrifice much time in seeking redress, they may choose the lessor of two evils, and put up with the wrong inflicted, rather than incur the loss they are compelled to sustain by seeking justice.

After the exordium, Mr. Thompson proceeded to consider in the first place, the machinery of the police system and secondly its operation and defects. His remarks were confined to the police administration in the lower provinces, and were founded upon the contents of the papers printed by the Government of Bengal in 1838. From these Mr. Thompson read numerous extracts to prove the corrupt and oppressive character of the existing system, and urged his friends to take advantage of the apparent desire of the Governor General to commence a plan of reformation.

It was then resolved to hold the weekly *conversazioni* in the upper rooms of No. 31 Fouzdaree Bala Khanna and to raise funds by donations and monthly subscriptions for the purchase of furnitures and the publication of Mr. Thompson's address, which are now printing in the form of a pamphlet, at the Bishops College press, also for defraying the expenses of the weekly meetings.

At the Native *conversazioni* held in the upper rooms of 31, Fouzdary Balakhana, on the 6th instant upwards of 300 persons were present.



Baboo Huru Coomar Tagore in the chair.

G.T.F. Speede Esqr. delivered an able speech upon the original Constitution of the Police, and the changes made by the British Govt. during its early administration of the affairs of the country.

George Thompson Esq. delivered a most elequent and powerful speech, encouraging all around him to persevere in the great cause of India, the stand undaunted by derision and ridicule and to use no weapons but these of truth and virtue. He said that many an empire had flourished and decayed and though the intellectual and moral grandeur of India had lost its lusture "Yet the people lived."

Degraded as was their condition by centuries of misrule and other causes, it was the duty of England to elevate them to "a position corresponding with their natural intelligence, and the unrivalled advantages of country."

He then revised the English administration in India, and observed that in coming these shores, his countrymen, however, distinguished he might have been for talent and heroism, had culpably failed to accomplish this object, their policy having been selfish and blind, and their ruling motive, self aggrandizement. He admitted that the English Government with all its defects was milder than the rulers whom India had before, but this was not enough. The English Government must be judged by its own standard, by its laws, by its own religion and by its own scale of moral and political duties. He averted to the growing interest, felt in Great Britain in matters connected with India the recall of Troops from foreign scenes of war, and the pledge of the Governor General to attend to the internal improvement of the country. He hoped the natives would avail themselves of these favourable circumstances in making known their grievances, and urging measures for reform and improvement in all that tended to the happiness of the people.

The address of which we regret to have been given only an imperfect and meagre outline, owing to want of time, drew from the assembly loud continued shout of applause,

It was then on the motion of Baboo Peary Chand Mitter, seconded by Baboo Dukhinarunjun Mukherjea, that Baboo Sreekissen Sing be appointed the Treasurer of the conversaziones.

[ *Bengal Spectator*, March 16, 1843 ]

Mr. George Thompson and the Native Conversaziones : —

At a native conversaziones held in the Upper Rooms of 31, Fouzdaree Balakhana, on Monday evening 13th instant, Baboo Sreekissan Sing in the chair.

Present Drs. C.C. Egerton and H.H. Goodeve, George Thompson Esq. G.T.F. Speede Esq. a number of Europeans, and about 300 native Gentlemen.

Mr. Speede had established at the last conversaziones by reading numerous extracts from official documents, that the chakran lands allotted before to Thanadars, Pykes etc. for maintaining village which were afterwards annexed to malgoozar lands, and it was therefore expected that the zemindars should have devoted the rents of these lands to the purposes of the village Police for which they had been originated. How far they had done so, is what he was desirous to know. The Chowkidars he said, were instead of being paid by them, supported by the people. He proceeded at this meeting to enter into the abuses and corruptions of the Thanadars system. In giving the police statistics of thirty two districts of Bengal and some of Bihar, he said that their whole Police strength was 175,632 men, having to control a population of 29,677,200 persons, every 100 of whom paid annually Rs. 22-8-6. He then observed that it was not safe to rely on the official reports made by magistrates on the states of the districts, and adduced instances corroborative of his statement. He said that as to the inefficiency of Chowkidars most of the authorities who had reported thereon, were unanimous, and they all attributed it to their not being duly remunerated. He mentioned the scale

of allowances of the Chowkidars in different districts where he had travelled and assumed Rs. 10,700,000 as the moderate amount of their annual extortions from the people. He concluded by instancing the malpractices of Darogas and their restoration to office even after the establishment of delinquency, as unworthy of christian patronage and regretted that the Police as administered at present was "One of mismanagement, oppression and extortions."

Baboo Syamacharan Sen read a paper written by Baboo Rasek Chunder Chunder :—It set out by reprobating the views of those who opine that the natives do not deserve a better government than what they have in consequence of their intellectual and moral incapacity to appreciate its blessings. It maintained that the present degradation of native character was attributable to the British Administration and quoted several extracts from M. Sullivan's speech in support of this opinion. He then touched on the mofussal Police and noticed the system of Batabundee or blocking dwelling houses. When a perwana is issued by a magistrate for the apprehension of the person who does not appear on receiving summons the officer who has to put it into execution, marches to his dwelling houses with a chorus of peons, who stationing themselves around it shut all entries from and regress into it by nailing bars on doors and windows.

The inmates thus cut off from all communication and even from the necessities of life, which they can get only by bribing the peons, have to remain besieged as long as the Batbundee which is known to have lasted for many months continues. The whole family how numerous be the number have thus to suffer equally for the fault of the member. The cases of Baboo Ramchander Chatterjee of Santipoor Zilla Nudia and Ramdhone Banerjee of Tellonepara were mentioned as known instances of the injustice and hardship of the system. It was maintained that the Calcutta police was better than Muffassal police where the system and not the Officer was to blame for the state of inefficiency.

Baboo Rajnarayan Dutt made an eloquent speech on the

general administration of the country, in which he stated that Government seem to pay more attention to the realisation and augmentation of revenue than to the peace and prosperity of the people. The preservation of life and prosperities of the people was not sufficiently regarded, because he supposed it would make no pecuniary return, and it was surprising that the amelioration of police was neglected while money was lavished in the festivities and fooleries of Ferozpoor. With respect to the vice of Native Officers he was of opinion that it was attributable to their scanty allowance and that Europeans in their circumstances would be to the commission of the same fault. He then confuted the observation of Mr. Macaulay in the *Edinburgh Review* that deceit is a characteristic of the Bengalee, by saying, that if he had come in contact with respectable portion of the Native community, he would not have made it. He concluded by calling on his countrymen to continue exposing their grievances and pointing out measures for reform.

Mr. Thompson, in adverting to the utility of the conversaciones passed an eulogium on the information afforded by Mr. Speede, on the intelligence of the Native speakers. He said that he had witnessed similar meetings in Great Britain and other parts of the world, and would fearlessly call upon the European gentlemen around him to say whether the decorum, the knowledge, the fee sense, and the temperance of the meeting those before him were not greater than on an average distinguished the meetings held by the people of England. He thought the subject of police had elicited a large amount of valuable information, and hoped it could not be dismissed without presenting a memorial to Government praying for "a thorough change in the system" to which the people paying revenue for their protection were justly entitled. He dwelt on the wretched and helpless condition of Ryots, and said that if for pecuniary resources the state of police could not be ameliorated, the cries of the Indian people should reach the ears of the queen, the Parliament and the people of England. He then pointed out the mischievousness of the



system of inadequate remuneration to Government Native officers, deprecated the vast expense incurred for unnecessary war in Afganistan as a misappropriation of public money, while it was withheld from being appropriated to legitimate to purposes and conjured the assembly to persevere in agitating the subject of Police until a pure and efficient administration of it was affected.

At Native conversaziones held in the upper rooms of No. 31 Fouzdaree Balakhana, on the 20th instant.

Baboo Jurry Mohun Sen in the chair. Present George Thompson, G.T.F. Speede Esq. several Europeans, East Indians and about 200 Native gentlemen.

Baboo Govinda Chunder Majoomdar addressed the meeting at some length, dwelling on some of the Native Characteristics, among which he prominently noticed the want of union and on the unfairness of the remarks made by the Calcutta Star against the conversaziones. He maintained that the Natives were fully susceptible of improvement and adduced the instance of the Medical College to support his views. With respect to the subject of police he regretted to find that equal protection was not given to the poor and the rich.

Mr. Thompson spoke at some length as the charges preferred against him, that he neglected practical questions and engendered in the audience a spirit of disloyalty. He challenged any one by reference to his past career and to what he had said even in unguarded moments to show that there was any foundation in them. Though it was his object to assist in the promotion of the happiness of this country, yet he never wished any one to be disloyal or disregard its laws, however anxious he was to see that they should be "equal in their nature and impartial in their administration."

With respect to the remarks that no practical good had resulted from the weekly meetings he observed that it was hasty, as only six or seven conversations have taken place, at which such addresses had been delivered as were calculated



to interest and enlist the feelings of the audience in the great cause of India, and it was visionary to expect so too any practical effect.

He however advised all around him to be circumspect in all that they said and did and pursue a course in every respect blameless. He read passage from his lectures delivered in England three years ago to falsify the insinuation that what he now said was different from what he had said before. He also quoted the opinions of Lord Bentinck Hon'ble J. F. Shore, Mr. Halt Machenzee, Capt. Westmacoth, and De. Spray on the British administration and its effects, in order to prove that they were written in a much stronger language that what had been employed by any gentlemen and the conversaziones in the warmth of discussion.

Mr. G. T. F. Speede then made a few observations in support of the view taken by Baboo Gobind Chunder Majoomdar and said that the poor were more highly taxed but not equally protected with the rich.

Proposed by Mr. G. T. F. Speede, seconded by George Thompson Esq. and carried unanimously, that a committee be appointed to collect facts and prepare a report on the state of the police both in Calcutta and Moffussal.

Proposed by Baboo Ganendra Muhun Tagore, seconded by Baboo Ramchunder Mittra, and carried unanimously, that the following gentlemen be appointed to the Committee with power to add to their number :

G. Thompson, G. T. F. Speede, M. Cros Esq. Baboo Chunder Sikhur Deb, Shama Churn Sen, Gobind Chunder Majumder, Hury Mohun Sen, Peary Chand Mittra and Rajnaryan Dutt Esqs.

On the motion of Mr. F. Speede the following subject was chosen for consideration at the next conversaziones :

The system of middlemen in India and the Bename purchase of lands. We recommend all Mofussal friends who feel interested in the progress of reform to lose no time in furnishing the secretaries with all the information they possess on

the subject to police, as also on the one to be discussed at the next conversazione, on Monday Evening, the 27th instant. It is unnecessary to add, that this is an excellent opportunity for rendering themselves useful to the country and that they will render an essential service if they can suggest feasible remedies for all or any of the abuses to be exposed by them.

[ *Bengal Spectator*, March 24, 1843 ]

The weekly conversazione of Native Community was held at Fouzedare Ballakhana, No. 31, on the 13th instant.

G. T. F. Speede, Esq. in the chair ; Present several Europeans and one hundred Native Gentlemen.

Baboo Huruchundra Lohoree observed that the clause prohibiting of the Benami purchase of lands was omitted in the New Sale Act, and that it was productive of evil. He said that when the question had been discussed by the law commissioners, the majority of them thought that it was customary with the Natives of this country to purchase lands etc., in the name of their sons, relations, etc., for which reason they saw no motive to restrain the practise. He, however, was of opinion that it was detrimental to the interest of the society, as far as the claims of the creditors were concerned and that it encouraged Amlas or collectors to acquire property by unfair means. He submitted that a representation should be made to Government to render it invalid. He then descended on the evils of the Batwara system, viz. that in a case where partition had not been commenced the whole estate was sold if the revenue for any portion was not paid, and was for the fault of one co-partner, other had suffered, he was of opinion that a petition should also be presented to Government for remedying the evil.

Baboo Duckinarunjun Mookerjee spoke at some length of the condition of the ryots under the Hindu, the Mohamedan, and the British administration and showed that under the

Native Government the right in the soil was in private individuals, and that it was a great mistake to convert Zemindars, who were the collectors of Revenue, in to proprietors of landed estates, by which act the rights of a vast number have been sacrificed.

Baboo Shyama Churn Sen was of opinion that there were three causes of the distressed condition of ryots : First, oppression of Zeminders ; Second, oppression of wealthy neighbours ; and Third their own ignorance ; and made a few remarks in support of these opinions.

Mr. Speede maintained that the poverty, and not ignorance prejudice prevented the ryots from inducing improvements in agriculture. He recited the instances which had fallen under his observation in some part of Moorshedabad a few years ago, in order to establish the point.

Proposed by Mr. Speede, seconded by Mr. Huru Chunder Lahoree, and carried unanimously.

That a committee be formed for the serious consideration of the existing disconnection between the Zeminder and ryots, and to seek evidence on the state of both parties, with a view to the restoration of that patriarchal system which so long and so happily existing, and the best means of giving encouragement to the protection of the best interests of both, so also develop, to the utmost extent the undoubtedly vast resources of India.

It was then agreed that the following resolutions, framed by the provisional Committee, are to be submitted to the reconsideration of a preliminary Meeting to be held at Fouze-daree Balakhana, on Monday, the 17th instant, at 5'0 clock, P.M. and that the place where the General Meeting is to be called on the 20th instant, be determined by the preliminary Meeting.

That in the deliberate and solemn judgement of this meeting the circumstances of the British Indian Empire and relations subsisting between that Empire and the Government and people of Great Britain, impose upon every individual

member of the community, the duty of doing all in his power to amilorate the condition of the people, and to advance the general prosperity of this country.

II. That it is the opinion of the Meeting, that, in addition to individual effort, it is expedient and necessary that a society should be formed in Calcutta, upon a basis that shall admit of the friendly co-operation of all persons anxious to promote the good of India, and the improvement, efficiency and stability of the British Government, without respect of Caste, Creed, Place of Birth, or Rank in Society.

III. That a society be now formed and denominated, The Bengal British India Society, the object of which shall be, the collection and dissemination of information relating to the actual condition of the people of British India, and the Laws, Institutions, and Resources of the country, and to employ such others means, of a peaceable and lawful character, as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just rights, and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects.

IV. That the society shall adopt and recommend such measures only as are consistent with pure loyalty to the person and government of the feigning sovereign of the British dominions, and the due observation of all law and regulations promulgated for the Government of the people of the country ; and shall discountenance Every effort to subvert legal authority, or disturb the peace and well-being of society.

V. That all persons of adult-age and not at the time of receiving instructions in any public institution, contributing to the funds of the society, and conscientiously subscribing to the above fundamental Resolutions, shall be eligible to Membership.

VI. That the following gentlemen be committee to prepare an address to the public, founded upon the foregoing resolutions, together with a list of officers, and such rules and regulations as may appear to be necessary for the management of the affairs of the society and submit the same to a



general meeting of Members, to be held in this place on Thursday Evening, the 20th instant.

[ *Bengal Spectator*, April 17, 1843 ]

Bengal British India Society : At a public Meeting held on Thursday evening the 20th of April, 1843, in No. 31 Fouze-dari Balakhana.

George Thompson Esq. in the chair, the following Resolution was carried :—Moved by G.T.F. Speede, Esq. Seconded by Baboo Ram Chunder Mitter.

I. That in the deliberate and solemn judgement of this meeting, the circumstances of the British Indian Empire, and the relations subsisting between that Empire and the government and People of Great Britain impose upon every individual member of the community, the duty of doing all in his power to ameliorate the condition of the people, and to advance the general prosperity of this country.

Moved by Mr. Crow, Esq. Seconded by Baboo Madhusudan Sen.

II. That it is the opinion of this Meeting that in addition to individual effort, it is expedient and necessary that a Society should be formed in Calcutta, upon a basis that shall admit at the friendly co-operation of all person anxious to promote the good of India, and the improvement, efficiency, and stability of the British Government without respect of Caste, Creed, and Place of Birth or Rank in Society.

Moved by Baboo Tarachand Chuckroburtee. Seconded by Baboo Chunder Saikhur Deb.

III. That a Society be now formed and denominated, The Bengal British India Society ; the object of which shall be, the collection and dissemination of information relating to the actual condition of the people of British India, and the Laws, Institutions and Resources of the country ; and to employ such other means, of a peaceable and lawful character, as may



appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects.

Moved by Baboo Ramgopal Ghose. Seconded by Baboo Shamachurn Sen.

IV. That the society shall adopt and recommend such measures only, as are consistent with pure loyalty to the person and Government to the reigning Sovereign of the British dominions, and the due observance of the laws and regulations of their country.

Moved by Baboo Pearychand Mittra. Seconded by Baboo Ramgopal Ghose.

V. That all persons of adult age, and not at the time of receiving instruction in any public seminary contributing to the funds of the society, and conscientiously subscribing to the above fundamental Resolutions, shall be eligible to membership.

Moved by G.T.F. Speede, Esq. Seconded by Baboo Prankissan Baugchee. Ramgopal Ghose, Tarrachand Chuckroburti and Peary Chand Mittra be a Committee to prepare an Address to the public, founded upon the foregoing resolutions, together with a list of officers and such rules and regulations as may appear to be necessary for the management of the affairs of the society, and submit the same to a general meeting to be held in this place on Thursday Evening the 4th of May next.

The warmest thanks of the meeting were voted to the chairman who, in returning thanks, said that he heartily wished the society success, and that his heart and soul would be devoted to the amelioration of this country, wherever he was.

We recommend all gentlemen desirous of becoming members to the Society to send in their names to the committee, who we have no doubt will be glad to attend to all communications until the office bearers are elected.

[ *Bengal Spectator*, April 25, 1843 ]

Bengal British India Society : A Meeting of the members of the above society was held on Thursday evening, the 11th instant at Fouzedari Ballakhanna, No. 31.

G.T.F. Speede Esq. was called to the chair.

The Bye laws framed by the committee were taken into consideration seriatim, which gave to rise to a good deal of discussion, and they now stand as follows :—

1. That communication respecting the present actual condition of India and the best means of prosecution the work of amelioration be invited, together with statement of fact, authenticated, calculated to illustrate the various subjects brought under the notice of the society.

2. That for the purpose of reference on all subjects connected with the Laws, Institutions, and Resources of the country, and the circumstance and wants of the people, a library shall be established to embrace, as practicable, the most useful and necessary works.

3. The Committee shall from time to time, consider the nature and report their opinions when necessary, to the monthly meeting of the members.

4. The General Committee shall, from time to time, as they deem necessary and expedient, prepare abstracts and digest of printed works bearing upon the topics under the consideration of the society.

5. The Committee shall prepare and circulate, with all convenient speed, a series of questions, calculated to elicit information in the subjects comprised in the general objects of the society, and shall subsequently found thereon reports to the general meetings.

6. The Committee shall superintend the printing and dissemination of such publication from time to time authorize.

7. The society shall, through it's committee, prepare and present to Government, representations memorials and petitions for the redress of grievances and the introduction of measures of reform.

8. The committee, with the sanction of the society, shall from time to time prepare and publish in English or vernacular of the rights, duties, and interests of the different class of people, for circulation among them.

9. That from August next, candidates for admission be proposed by one member and seconded by another at one meeting, that a ballot shall take place at the next, and that no election shall be valid unless the candidates have the votes of two-third of the members present.

10. Any member desiring to bring forward a proposition involving a change in the constitution or general objects of the society shall be required to give a months notice, which notice shall be duly advertised and when a vote is taken, Members shall have the right of voting by proxy.

11. That the Members shall be required to pay an annual subscription of not less than six rupees payable by quarterly instalments.

12. That the society shall have one president, two vice presidents, a native and a christian secretary, a treasurer, and a committee of twelve exclusive of the office bearers, who shall be Members ex-officio.

13. All office bearers shall be members of the society and be annually elected and shall be eligible for re-election.

14. The members shall hold monthly meetings on the first Thursday of every month, and on such other days as the members may determine and shall proceed with business whenever six members are present exclusive of office bearers.

15. Members desiring to bring forward a subject for consideration requiring discussion, shall intimate their intention at a previous monthly meeting and obtain the consent of the majority to do so.

16. The meeting of the society shall be open to the public—the discussion and votes being confined to bonafide members.

17. The Meetings of the General Committee, and of

all sub-committees shall be open to all members, subject to alike restriction in the foregoing rule.

18. That in the General Committee there shall form a quorum.

19. A general meeting of the society shall be held annually on the first Thursday of May, for the reception of the Annual Report of the committee, the election of office bearers, and the despatch of any other business that may be submitted for consideration.

20. That the finances of the society shall be under the control of the General Committee who shall appoint a sub-committee for the management of this department.

The following resolutions were carried.

That the committee be requested to arrange the By-Laws in such order and sequence, and to make such verbal alteration in them as may appear to them best.

The following Gentlemen were appointed Office Bearers.

1. George Thompson, E q. President.
2. Baboo Ramgopal Ghose, Treasurer.
3. Baboo Peary Chand Mitter, Secretary.
4. Committee : G. T. F. Speede, Esq., G. F. Remfry, Esq., M. Crow Esq.

Baboo Hurry Mohan Sen, Tara Chand Chukraborty, Govind Chand Sen, Chunder Sikhur Deb, Duckinaranjan Mookerjee, Brojonath Dhur, Rev. Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Shyma Churn Sen., Sat Cowrie Dutt.

Baboo Peary Chand Mitter informed the meeting that he had received from Mr. George Thompson a draft for 100 Rupees as his donation to the society. He presumed the members must be aware that this was his second donation, for which he proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Thompson, which was carried by acclamation.

Mr. Thompson in returning thanks offered to deliver two lectures at the next two monthly meetings on the Acts passed

by the Government of India during the present year which was accepted with loud cheers of applause.

The thanks of the meeting were then offered to the chairman.

We have the pleasure to inform our readers 31 Natives and 10 Europeans have already become members of the society. To save the committee the trouble of circulating the subscription book, we recommend those who are desirous of joining the society to send in to the committee or the Secretary, their names, addresses and the amount of annual subscriptions they intend paying the minimum rate being Six Rupees per annum.

We have much pleasure in publishing the following questions on the condition of the cultivators of the soil, to be circulated by the Sub Committee and trust the gentlemen to whom they will be transmitted, will endeavour their best to afford correct information on the subject.

1. Enumerate the different classes of Ryots and state the nature of the tenure under which lands are held by them.
2. Are there any graded of under tenants from the Ryots ? If so how many land what are the rights enjoyed by them ?
3. What are the distinction of land recognized in the district ?
4. What are the articles produced on each of those descriptions of lands, and how many crops do they annually yield ?
5. Do the Ryots in general cultivate their own lands ? If not, by whom is such land tilled ? What proportion does the number of Ryots cultivating, their own lands bear to the number of those who employ others to cultivate them ?
6. What is the average quantity of production per biggha of each description of land and the average market value thereof ?



7. Where the Ryots does not himself cultivate his land, what is the amount of his wages or the proportion of produce paid by him to the actual cultivator of the soil ?

8. What is the amount of expense for cultivating a biggah of each description of land ?

9. Enumerate the different items of charge incurred from the preparation of soil up to the state of production.

10. What are the means which the Ryots possess for paying these charges ?

11. If he borrows, from whom and on what terms ? State all the particulars of the system called Mohajonee Tuccavee etc., as far as Ryots are concerned.

12. State the different rates of rents paid per biggah of each description of land by the Ryots and under tenants.

13. State all the Abwabs imposed by the Zemindars Tallookdars, Farmers, etc., upon the Ryots or by the Ryots upon the under tenants and how are these Abwabs collected.

14. What proportion do their Abwabs bear to the rent paid by the ryots ?

15. What interest is charged by the Zeminders on the Ryot in case of delay made in paying their demand ?

16. Are any salaries of other fines paid by the ryots to Zeminders or by the under tenants by the Ryots ?

17. What proportion do such fines bear to the rental ?

18. What proportion does the average profit of the Ryots bear to the rent and Abwabs be paid, both in the case of him who cultivates the lands himself and of him who employs others to do so ?

19. Distinguish as far as possible the profits of capital and the profits of labour in the district ?

20. Fill up the following form according to the best of your knowledge.

How many Ryots in a hundred make annually from 12 to 30 Rupees ?

Ditto from 31 to 60 Rupees.

Ditto from 61 to 100 Rupees.

Ditto from 100 to 200 Rupees.

Ditto upwards to 200 Rupees,

21. What is the general mode of living of the Ryots and what is the average yearly expense per week ?

22. What are general habits of with regard to frugality, strictly so ?

23. State your belief as to the desire of the Ryots to enjoy the comforts and luxuries of life.

24. What in the opinion of the Ryots constitute the necessities, the comforts, and the luxuries of life ?

25. State all the particulars you are aware of regard the state of education among the Ryots of different classes.

26. What do you think will be the best means of promoting education among them ?

27. What is the state of feeling with regard to their present condition, and whether they have any desire to ameliorate that condition ?

28. Can you suggest any means for the amelioration of their general condition ?

29. Were any improved method of culture ever introduced in your district by any Zeminders or Ryots ?

30. Is there any desire among the Zeminders, and to what extent, to educate their Ryots, or any other way to ameliorate their general condition ? Mention the instances you know of indicative of such disposition.

[ *Bengal Spectator*, May 17, 1843 ]

At a monthly meeting of the members of the Bengal British India Society held on the third instant.

Baboo Chunder Saikhur Deb in the chair, present 14 members and visitors.

Read the report of the last meeting and following minute of Baboo Chunder Saikhur Deb, member of the Sub-Committee for the consideration of Draft Acts, on the Draft Act concerning Appeals, in the Presidencies of Fort Williams in Bengal and Bombay.

"According to the present laws the decision of the Zillah and City Judges, in civil suits concerning property to the

value of One Thousand Rupees, and the decrees of the Judges, of the Sudder Dewany Adawlut, when the subject of dispute does not exceed Ten thousand rupees in value or final. In cases in which a property is at a stake, and appeal lies to the king in council. This part of the law is not adopted by the draft enactment now before us.

“It is an other part of our law that it suits for less than one thousand Rupees which are cognizable by Moonsiffs or Sudder Ameens, an appeal lies from the decisions of those functionaries to the Moffussil Judge, and that if such appeal is tried by the Judge himself, there is no further appeals to be made, but if referred to the principal Sudder Ameen for trial, there lies second appeal from the decision of the latter to the Judge who has the final voice. In such cases, that in suits of greater value than One Thousand Rupees but not exceeding Five Thousand the decisions are first passed by principal Sudder Ameen then reviewed an appeal by the civil Judge, and afterwards reviewed on a second appeal by the Sudder Dewany Adawlat but that in suits for property valuing from five to ten thousand rupees the original decrees are passed either by the principal Sudder Ameen or civil Judge of the district and only one appeal lies to the Sudder Dewany Adawlat, that in suits however for any greater amount of property than ten thousand rupees an appeal from the decision of the Judge or principal Sudder Ameen lies first to the Sudder Dewany Adawlat here and secondly to the Privy Council in England. There are thus two appeals upon in all civil suits with the exception, 1st of those which the decisions of Moonsiffs and Sudder Ameens are reviews and Sudder Judge himself and 2ndly of cases regarding property valued from five to ten thousand rupees in which an appeal lies directly from the Judge or Principal Sudder Ameen to the Sudder Adawlat without further appeal to any other tribunal with regard to the first of those two classes of suits excepted from second appeals it is perhaps not subjected to the delay of a further appeal to the Sudder, in respect to the other class of cases (these for five to ten thousands

rupees) there does not appear to be any good reason why a second special appeal should not be allowed in them, in cases of inferior value viz those for one to five thousands rupees.

"It is perhaps one part of the intention of the Draft law before us to correct the anomaly here alluded to. It proposes that all appeals, in cases of from five to ten thousand rupees of judicial be principal Sudder Ameens lie to the district Judge, whose Judgment will of course be final unless there be any ground for a special appeal to the Sudder Dewany Adawlat. Thus the appeals are opened in those cases as in the others. But it is evident that while the proposed plan of appeal affords this advantages it takes away the benefit of the the most important appeal being tried and decided by a Judge (some times by TWO OR MORE JUDGES) of greater experience and longer practice. This disadvantage is by no means counter balanced by the advantage attendant on the plan. And I would rather have one appeal to the Sudder Dewany Adwalat, where the decisions are passed by two or more Judges of longer standing and experience on all points of difficulty than appeal to the Moffusil Judge, subject only to the special appeal to the Sudder. Special appeals are seldom available as they lie only on points of law and practice, and for the correction of any manifest of irregularity.

"In my humble opinion a better method of supplying desideratum mentioned above, in respect to suits for from five to ten thousands rupees, would be to grant a special second appeal in those cases to the English sittings of the Sudder Dewany Adalat, but whether such a suggestion be considered plausible or not, I would call the particular attention of the other members of the committee and societies to the provisions of the present draft enactment. The whole subject of appeal in judicial proceedings seems to me to deserve the most mature consideration of the society."

CHUNDER SAIKHUR DEB. P. S. "To show that there are

other anomalies in the law of appeals besides the one alluded to above, I beg to point out that the judges of the Muffasil Courts are competent under the present law, singly to upset the decision of a subordinate tribunal, though the concurrent voices of two judges of the Sudder are necessary to alter any judgement passed by any court subordinate to the latter. This last mentioned anomaly can surely be at once corrected by requesting the Muffasil Judges to refer to a neighbouring court any cases of differences of opinion.

[ *Bengal Spectator*, August 16, 1843 ]



## RADHANAUTH SIKDER CASE\*

Mr. Vansitart Vs. Babu Radhanauth Sikder.

"Oh Judgement thou art fled to brutish beasts."

To the editor Bengal Spectator.

Sir, Though no one can be more keenly sensitively to these grateful feelings with which the contemplation of the blessings we enjoy under the auspicious of the English Government is associated than I am, yet the abuses with which it is fraught are so many & so varied, so obviously calculated to retard the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as to make it an imperative duty on the part of our rulers to effect their extermination. Those abuses though they relate to the judicial and revenue bear on this occasion more particularly on the Police system. The Calcutta Police bad as it is, is still, a Heaven compared with that pandemonium the so called Muffasil Police. That the operation of the latter exhibits an absolute dereliction of the principles of justice and the continuance of systematic approbation is now universally acknowledged. The strong and qualified testimony borne by that large minded friend of our country, the Honourable Mr. Shore, to the utter inefficiency of the Police as well as the report of the committee prove that the Govt.

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\*Radhanauth Sikder, a direct pupil of Derozio, was a well-known reformer. He particularly took up the cause of the downtrodden masses, notably the hill-men porters who were employed by the Survey of India, where he also worked. Many of the European officers used to beat up the porters and Radhanauth consistently opposed this practice. Once he directly clashed with one such European leading to a criminal case against him. He lost the case but became a kind of hero in the eyes of Young Bengal. This is a full reprint of the case proceedings as appeared in *BENGAL SPECTATOR*. [ Ed. ]

and its servants, though fully cognizant of the melancholy fact that the system of Police they have established on the ruins of the simple patriarchal, efficient Police of our ancestors, is a system of robbing and plunder, have done little or nothing to reform it. But the evils of this system are not to be attributed to the dishonesty of the subordinates alone.

We talk of the pride and capacity of the Daroga. We declaim AGAINST the oppression and tyranny of his Myrmidone. But we do not dream of saying anything respecting these placed at their head, and on whose virtue, talents and zeal the safety of the administration of police depends.

The integrity and intelligence of the magistrate can least in a far greater degree neutralize the effects resulting from the dishonesty and idleness of the subordinates, than what is generally supposed.

But how often is the Daroga, maltreating and insulting people of respectability and rank, countinancing every vice, illustrating in his own conduct every sort of fraud and chicanery which he is called upon to prevent and punish in other people, sacrificing the interests of thousands to his own selfishness, is the type of his superiors ?

These remarks were suggested by the perusal of a lengthened and circumstantial account in the hills of the 22nd last of the proceedings of a case tried by the magistrate of Dehradun. Baboo Radhanauth Sikder was the defendant and the magistrate himself was the complainant. The proceedings tend to prove as the Englishman justly observes "that the very respectable body composing the present magistracy is not altogether exempt from these failings which have been supposed to disqualify others from holding similar appointments." Baboo Radhanauth Sikder Sub-Assistant of the great Trigonometrical Survey, resides near Musoori with Messrs Clarkson and Keelan his fellow officers. Six Paharis in their employ were on the 5th May forcibly and unjustly worked by a police Chaprasi. They were also ruthlessly caned by the last mentioned functionary for their reluctance to comply with

his request. So they had to pass the house occupied by their masters, Baboo Radhanauth caused them to deposit the contents of their heads in the house, in order to discover the author of this violence, who he thought must appear and claim his property.

THIS PRODUCED THE DESIRED EFFECT. On the Jamadar being refused when he came to claim the detained goods, the owner himself appeared at Baboo R's house and who should he prove but the worthy magistrate H. Vansitart, Esq. II When Mr. Vansitart said to Baboo Radhanauth "what business have you to detain my property"? he answered "Just as much as you had in pressing and maltreating my people to convey your baggage and I intend to take legal measures". Mr. Vansitart confessed that he had ordered his people to procure coolies but not to press private servants, and claimed the restoration of his property. The Baboo refused to comply with his request unless the owner would give his written acknowledgement that the property detained was his. To this the magistrate replied "I will do no such thing". The object of his requiring the voucher was to prove the connection of the worthy with the forcible seizure or employment of the coolies. Captain P. Patterson who had accompanied the magistrate to the Baboo's house, talked to him in such an insulting and scurrilous language as no gentleman would condescend to use towards another. The Magistrate however after having promised to that fellow in the court departed with his friend the Captain. At 10 A.M. on the same day (6th May) Radhanauth restored the property to the Jamadar on the receipt of written acknowledgement from Mr. Vansitart.

At 11 O'clock A.M. Mr. Vansitart took the deposition Captain Patterson and Messers Webb and Clarkson in a room with closed door in Colonel Everest's house. At O'clock P. M. he ordered Baboo Radhanauth to attend his camp at Thana on the following day and give his evidencednce in Hindustani and on his (defendant's) pleading ignorance of that language insisted on his giving it in Bengalee. When

Radhanauth arrived at Thana he found that the magistrate had proceeded four or five miles. The circumstances of his not having made any arrangement for a further journey necessitated him to send an apologetic note to the magistrate and to return. He then received another pre-emptory order to attend in his camp in Makte Ki Pouri.

FOUR MOUNTAIN MARCHES FROM MUSSURI. He learns at Makte Ki Pouri that the magistrate is encamped at Debon, whither he directs his steps and meets his "Accuser and judge". His evidence being taken, he was ordered home. Mr. Vansitart then makes out a criminal case against him and brings it in his own court. Mr. Vansitart the magistrate tried the case of Mr. Vansitart the prosecutor and the result of the trial was the imposition of a fine of 400 Rupees on Baboo Radhanauth Sikder viz. 200 Rupees for his contempt of the magistrate's order. A like penalty was also inflicted on Messrs Clarkson and Keelan.

Though the statement being an expert one, I am not fully competent to judge of the pros and cons of the case, yet from calm and dispassionate review of all the circumstances connected to it is manifest the whole proceeding is marked by irregularity and exhibits a deviation from law and principles of justice. The stern refusal of the magistrate to give a vouch to the Baboo in order that the sufferers might be enabled to seek justice against the party who pressed them, affords an indubitable evidence of his connection with the business. True that he directed his men not to press private servants, but he could not deny that they had instructions to press some who were not private servants. New as a magistrate, was he not bound to discountenance and punish this practice in others? The doubt said to be entertained as to finding sufficiently intelligent and honest persons out of the pale of the civil service for the purpose of being appointed to the proposed deputy magistrates is obviously futile. Intelligent and virtue are not concentered in the civil service. I have rather hurriedly brought this letter to conclusion, and have more to add than that the manly and



independent conduct of Baboo Radhanauth in this whole transaction can not be sufficiently lauded.

Yours

A Reader

[ *Bengal Spectator*, May 17, 1843 ]

Baboo Radha Nauth Sikder and Mr. H. Vansitart, Superintendent of Dehra Dun :—Our readers are probably aware that on the 8th June, Mr. H. Vansitart, Superintendent of Dehra Dun fined Baboo Radhanauth Sikdar and Messrs Clarkson and Keelan all of the same place in the sum of Rs. Two hundred respectively for the "forcible and illegal detention of property belonging to Lft. Liout Patterson and Mr. Vansitart and like sum for" contempt and disobedience of Magistrate's orders." The particulars of the case are as follows :—Six of the Paharis in the service of Baboo Radhanauth Sikder and Messrs Keelan and Clarkson having being seized and detained with ill treatment and flogging by Chaprasees of the police establishment on the evening of the 5th May last, were proceeding each with a load to Rajpooor. Babu Radhanauth and the two European gentlemen seeing them pass by their house, ordered them to come up to deposit the goods in the premises, fully resolving upon sending them at 10 O'clock on the following morning to the Magistrate's Court with the view of tracing the owners and bringing the offender to justice. About an hour after one of the Judge Sahib's Chaprasee came and demanded the restitution of the goods, to which Baboo Radhanauth replied that he would restore them on the production of written Parwana from his master. Early on the next morning a Jamadar made his appearance with the same, requested Baboo Radhanauth repeated the answer he had given to the Chaprasee. At about 7 A. M. Mr. H. Vansitart and Liout Patterson accompanied by several natives without sending any intimation whatever walked into Radhanauth's chamber,



and following is the dialogue which took place between them and Baboo R. as reported by the latter.

One of those gentlemen called out "Who has detained my property ? I answered "it has been detained by my orders." He continued "what business had you to detain my property ?" I replied "Just as much as you had in pressing and maltreating my people to convey your baggage ; and I intend to take legal measures". He joined "I certainly gave orders to my people to procure coolies, but not press private servants : and I shall discharge my whole set of my Barkandazes." He asked Mr. Keelan to persuade him to give up the property. Mr. Keelan replied "but what security shall we have against the recurrence of the proceeding complained of ? I then observed, "there is no regulation authorising the forcible seizure and employment of any body". Upon which the gentleman IN QUESTION in loud and authoritative tone said "Do you know who I am ?" At this moment the other gentleman who had hitherto remained silent sprang forward and questioned me "who the devil are you ?" I answered "A man and so are you." The first speaker then checking his companion resumed, "I am Mr. Vansitart, the magistrate of the place, and request you will deliver up my property." The other gentleman then announced himself as Captain Patterson of the 16th lancers, and turning to Mr. Vansitart said "do not you be bandying words with a parcel of those damn fellows". I observed to Mr. Vansitart "as you are magistrate as well as the owner of the property I shall refer the case to Saharanpur." But said Mr. Vansitart "Will you deliver my property or not ?" 'yes' said I "upon your furnishing me with your parwana" "I will do no such thing" replied Mr. Vansitart "My word is sufficient, as a magistrate I can have you siezed". Here Captain Patterson interfered, and made use of very insulting language. Mr. Vansitart checked him and said "stop I will slouch that fellow well in my court." Then turning to the Jamadar in attendance of him he ordered as follows "Jamadar here ke pakro" (pointing to me) and "asbab

leo." At this the Jamadar stepped forward to apprehend me, but he could not lay hands on me, I remarked to Mr. Vansitart "recollect Sir you are employing force." I repeated this. Mr. Vansitart now refrained from carrying the said order into effect and lowering his voice asked me "will you then give it ( the property ) upto me as a private gentleman ?" 'yes' said I "upon your giving me a proper note." Mr. Vansitart rejoined "I will do no such thing," and Captain Patterson added in the most offending manner "Not to a damn fellow like you," and Mr. Vansitart said "Dont you be talking to those fellows, damn them come away, and let us go to Everest." When they were departing, I gave Captain Patterson to understand that I would hand him up to his Commanding Officer, and have him brought to a court martial for his insulting demenour" where upon he answered "do as you like and be damned."

The statement of Baboo Radhanauth Sikder from which we are supplying the particulars of the case stands uncontradicted and it's accuracy cannot therefore be doubted. The case as far as it has been reported, places Mr. Vansitart in a humiliating position considered with reference to his conduct both as a gentleman and as a magistrate. As a gentleman he should have apologised to Baboo Radhanauth Sikder and Messers Keelan and Clarkson for the unlawful seizure of their Paharees and the oppression exercised over them by his Chaprasees, an act which was almost tantamount to his own, and which is expected to excite in minds softened with the harmonizing influence of civilization and morality, feelings of regret and commiseration. Instead of adopting such a course, he tramples upon all etiquette, courteousness, and civility, and thrusts himself with a military gentleman and parcer of underlings, into the very apartment of the parties offended and aggrieved by his officers. His denying having ordered to press private servants and promising to discharge the whole set of his Barkandauses exculpates him from all sham of guilt in the business of impressment and would perhaps have been satisfactory if, in the eleventh hour he should have

added to it a few soothing words by way of explanation and apology, instead of being over bearing haughty and insolent, without having a apparently the least cause of provocation. His conduct therefore, as a gentleman cannot but draw down upon itself the antipathy of the enlightened community. As a magistrate he exhibited a want of judgement, an uncontrollable temper a supercilious behaviour and a pre-possessed intention. A minister of justice is called a corrupt judge when he is influenced by pecuniary considerations or similar motives. Though a magistrate in his magisterial capacity cannot investigate a matter in which he himself is concerned as is evident from the order of the Sudder Court to be herein after quoted, yet admitting that the practice was otherwise, what opinion are we to form of Mr. Vansitart for saying "stop I will slouch that fellow well in my court." And we are surprised to find that Mr. Vansitart is still allowed to hold the high trust reposed in him. If the government of this presidency could dismiss Mr. O'Halon for wrong judgement manifested in his letters to Mr. Gorden of the Union Bank although on a subject foreign to his official duties, how strong must be the case against the Superintendent of Dehra Dun for the improper conduct pursued by him towards a highly useful and esteemed Officer of the Government and above all declaring to "slouch him" well in the united capacity of a prosecutor, Jury and Judge, when no judicial evidence for or against was before him. The head and front of Baboo Radhanauth's offence was that he detained the goods belonging to Mr. Vansitart and Lieut Patterson, and insisted on a written order for their delivery. Hence arose two crimes viz first, forcible and illegal seizure of the goods and 2nd, contempt and disobedience of the magistrate's orders. With regard to the first we must say that Baboo Radhanauth would have acted more discreetly if he had sent the goods at once to the Thana, but keeping them at his own house "fully" resolving to make over them to the magistrate next morning, admitting the possession thereof, the very evening they were received, and intimating his readiness to restore them ever and ever

on being furnished with a parawana we do not see how he forcibly and illegally detained the goods. As to the 2nd charge which, like a bit of .....sprang from the first, it is perfectly frivolous and untenable. If they had not been delivered after the service<sup>2</sup> of the magistrate's parawana it would then have amounted to disobedience and contempt of his orders. As detained of the goods for the carriage of which his Paharees had been unjustly pressed and canned, and as a master feeling aggrieved and desirous of seeking redress injustice to them, to himself and the society at large it was but natural that he should wish to put himself in possession of a document for his own safety, and the eventual punishment of the offender. It would perhaps have been as well to have delivered the goods to the magistrate, when he demanded in the presence of several persons keeping a note of their names, that they might be called upon in future to prove the delivery thereof in case any dispute should arise, but we have no reason to find fault with the course pursued by Baboo Radhanauth, considering the circumstances in which he was placed and what objection could Mr. Vansitart have sending a written order? It was in no way derogatory to his dignity. On the contrary it would have been mere becoming and business like. How would Mr. Vansitart have acted if he had been in Baboo Radhanauth's circumstances? After leaving Baboo Radhanauth Mr. Vansitart sent at 10 A.M. a written order for delivery of the goods. Although it contained not his seal, it was however readily complied with. After 11 P. M. Mr. Vansitart took evidence of Lieut Patterson, Mr. Clarkson and Mr. Keelan in a room of Col. Everest's with closed doors, to which Radhanauth could not have access. After "O'clock he sent for Radhanauth and directed him to attend his camp at Thana next day. In compliance with this order, Radhanauth started on the seventh May, reached Jumna bridge after 2 O'clock, where he learnt that Mr. Vansitart's Cutcherry was four or five miles further off, and that he would not be able to arrive there



before his closing. Not having taken servants and baggages he could not stay at Thana and informing Mr. Vansitart to that effect and soliciting him to suspend all his proceedings until he returned to Musoori he returned home. On the 8th May Baboo was served with a parwana to attend immediately at Makte Ki Pouri at a distance of five mountain Marches from Musoori. Using expedition, and incurring a good deal of expenditure, Baboo Radhanauth arrived at the appointed place in the morning of the 11th May, where he heard that Mr. Vansitart was at Dooban, there marches off. Baboo Radhanauth accordingly went to Dooban, where Mr. Vansitart "put to him such questions as were calculated to make a case for himself, and were far from being a complete statement of the transaction of the oath" to which Radhanauth added that "in the hurry in which he conducted my examination he would often endeavour to put words in my mouth, and not give me time to reply to the whole of a question at a time. "On the closing of Badoo Radhanuth's evidence, Mr. Vansitart said that he "would submit the whole case to Government". On the 8th May the following Baboo Radhanauth was directed by Mr. Vansitart to attend his court and "without entering into the particular of the case," he disposed of it by imposing upon him and the European gentlemen the fines mentioned above. Wonderful decision A Daniel came to judgement. It turns out as it was expected. Does the Lynch Law transcend it much in its excellence and native virtue? We leave it to our readers to judge. If the decision of Mr. Vansitart is typical of the sort of some criminal cases in Mafussil court, we say then, there is not even the mockery of justice. But let us see how the matter ended.

Baboo Radhanauth appealed against the magistrates decision to the commissioner, who makes over the case to the Judge. He submits it to the sudder court of Allahabad. The points of which Baboo Radhanauth solicit redress are the following.

1. Forcible seizure and employment of my Paharees, by



Mr. Vansitart's Chaprasee on the 5th, where their labour was lost to me for a day.

2. Mr. Vansitart's ordering his Jamadar to seize me in the morning with the threat to maltreat me in this court.

3. His warrant issued on the 6th directing the apprehension of my person.

4. The examination of witness in the private dwelling of Colonel Everest and in my absence by Mr. Vansitart, who was himself the party in the case

5. Without specifying his reason, ordering me to attend on a Sunday, his Camp at Thenia, which is fifteen miles from Mussorie.

6. Without sufficient grounds, his directing a warrant to be served on me on the 7th thereby compelling me to undertake a journey to Dooban, which six mountains marches from Mussorie ; and thus subjecting me to considerable expence and great inconvenience.

7. And his refusing to receive my written deposition on the 12th and examining me in such a manner, to elicit a favourable case for himself.

The Sudder Court, in their letter of the 17th ultimo to the Judge of Saharanpoor passed the following Judgement on the case :—

As regards the first count on which the Baboo was indicted before the superintendent of Dehra Dun viz forcible and illegal detention of property belonging to Lieutenant Patterson and Mr. Vansitart, it would have been, more becoming, the court remarked if Mr. Vansitart who can hardly be regarded as other than party interested and concerned, to have abstained from passing a decision and to have applied in the first instance for permission to refer the case for trial to any of the neighbouring magistrate functionaries. In disposing of the second count, the superintendent of Dehra Doon only exercised a right inherent to all courts to support their authority by visiting with penal infliction a contemptuous defiance of it.

"You are at liberty to use your own discretion in quashing

the proceeding and annulling the orders of the superintendent of Dehra Doon in the case under consideration, and the court authorize Mr. Harvey to receive and determine any charge which may be brought against Radhanauth Sikder and other petitioners, by any of the parties who may think themselves aggrieved."

This decision has been communicated to the defendants by Mr. Vansitart and the fines imposed by him returned. So far the matter is satisfactory. But what compensation has been made for insult and disgrace to which Baboo Radhanath was put ? We should like to know what explanation Mr. Vansitart gave in vindication of himself.

The Sudder Court of Allahabad, the supreme tribunal of North Western India, has taken no notice of his conduct and does not even pronounce his decision irregular, further than that he should have obtained leave for referring the case to any of the neighbouring Magistrates. On the contrary they support him in the disposal of the second count and leave it to the discretion to annul his orders. We feel constrained to observe that we have been utterly disappointed in the decision of the Sudder Court and are afraid Baboo Radhanauth cannot have any further redress there or from the Govt. who if appealed to, will we suppose repeat what they generally say "we cannot interfere". We think we shall be borne out by a number of Moffusil friends that in many districts a civilian within the province of his jurisdiction moves and acts like a supreme lord. His court is not like an English but a Turkish Court where Amuruth to Amuruth succeeds... No question very much whether his proceedings, if narrowly scrutinized, will be generally found to accord with law and strict justice. The general run of the people over whose destinies men of his stamp rule, being ignorant and timid have not the force of a popular sanction. If one in a hundred had the firmness and courage to seek for redress from motives of doing justice to himself and to the society, many a dark deed would have been brought to light. This unfortunate circumstance no doubt helps many civilian to escape with

impunity and they often endeavour to hush up matters when brought before the high tribunal of this city. There was once an indictment in the Supreme Court against one for having caused conclusion between the heads of two witnesses while on the bench. It was we believe quashed, by offering certain pecuniary consideration to the prosecutor. A few months ago there was the case of filing another against a Magistrate for breaking into a respectable man's house, which we are afraid has been nipped in the bud, and we know not how the one now pending will end.

It is our firm impression that there is a clanship among the civilians which prevents strict justice being done by one to another. Such is and will be the disadvantage to the country as long as the service is maintained and we recommend Baboo Radhanauth to turn all thoughts from the Company's courts for the redress of the injury done to him by Mr. Vansitart. The only tribunal where he can have redress is the Supreme Court of Calcutta and if he stands there to prosecute Mr. Vansitart, we think it is the duty of those who advocate for public justice to support and cheer him in such a sprite undertaking.

The admirable judgement pronounced upon Mr. J. B. Oglivy a few years ago, was no doubt a lesson to many. Time and other circumstances seem, however, to have blunted the edges of its effectiveness, which the interests of this country require, should be rendered as lasting as possible. It is therefore desirable, that it should be followed by similar decisions of their unjust and oppressive cases, that constantly happen in the Moffusil as a partial preventive of the bad system of administration which now obtain. We perceive by the Bills of the 17th ultimo, that Mr. Vansitart and Lieut Patterson have brought charges against Baboo Radhanauth and Messers Clarkson and Keelan and the charges preferred against them before, in the court of Mr. G. H. F. Harvey, Magistrate of Saharunpoor, and that the trial commenced of the 14th August which we shall notice in our next.

[*Bengal Spectator*, September 1, 1843]

Baboo Radhanauth Sikder and Mr. H. Vansitart of Dehra Doon :

The trial of Baboo Radhanauth Sikder and others having been resumed on the 15th August, Mr. Harvey read out the charges viz. 1st forcible seizure and illegal detention of property belonging to Lieut Patterson and Mr. Vansitart. And 2nd contemptuous defiance of Mr. Vansitart, magistrate authority in the following instances :—

1st refusing to give up the above goods when distinctly and repeatedly ordered Mr. Vansitart, as magistrate to do so.

2nd resisting the Jamadar of Police in his attempt to execute the order given by Mr. Vansitart, to seize the property by opposing his entrance to the verandah of the house, and by the use of threatening gesture and language.

The witnesses on the side of the prosecution as well as on that of the defence were examined Mr. Harvey concurred with Baboo Radhanauth Sikder, that the letter of the Nizamut Adawlat did not empower him to try the Baboo and the other defendants upon the second count. He, therefore, passed sentence of the first count, fining the Baboo in the sum of Two Hundred Rupees, or imprisoning him for six months and acquitting Messrs. Clarkson and Keelan as their names did not appear on the evidence.

It is pity that the deposition of witnesses are not in print. The Judgement of Mr. Harvey was as follows :—

It is everywhere in proof and not denied by the Baboo that the certain coolies carrying loads and property of Mr. H. Vansitart, Superintendent of Dehra Doon (proceeding on duty into his districts) and Captain Patterson were while passing the house of Radhanauth Baboo, called up from the high road and made to deposit their loads in the Baboo's verandah, the property so unloaded belonging to Mr. Vansitart and Captain Patterson, that the coolies at the same time informed the Baboo that the property was that of the Judge Sahib the designation by which Mr. Vansitart is known to that class of people.

2nd. Police Chaprasses and a Jamadar were sent wearing



their Badges and taking other coolies to request the delivery of the property and were turned out of the Baboo's premises and told not to return without purwanah (as stated by themselves, they were abused but this is partly denied and is immaterial) ; Mr Vansitart in person attended by some of the police went to endeavour to obtain his property and it is everywhere in evidence the Baboo was aware of Mr. Vansitart's identity, that before several witnesses and in the presence of police Mr. Vansitart as Magistrate requested of the Baboo that he should deliver up the property, promised redress in any complaint the Baboo might have to make in respect of coolies being seized by the Burkandazes and that in defiance of this order of magistrate the Baboo refused to deliver up the property without a written parwanah, the seal of Mr. Vansitart office and his Omlah being in camp. His (Mr. Vansitart's) verbal order in all respects in such circumstances having the force of a purwanah, and the Baboo having the best of all security for complying that of Mr. Vansitart official responsible to Government if he exceeding the authority entrusted to him. Mr Vansitart instead of proceeding (as I conceive he would have been warranted) to enforce his order proceeded to Colonel Everest's the Baboo's official superior and that officer it is in evidence (given by the Baboo's own witness Mr. Webb) sent Mr. Webb to urge the Baboo to deliver up the wish or the warning contained in Colonel Everest's message and persisted in his refusal to deliver, and determination to detain the property and it was only upon an order written by one of the Colonel Everest's people and dictated and signed by Mr. Vansitart that his property was obtained at 10½ A.M. or after some 17 or 18 hours detention

3rd. The case was of the pressing of the coolies is no part of what I have to investigate, but it was admitted by the Baboo and confirmed by Colonel Everest who was present, that the practice through the official authority had always prevailed in the hills. That the Surveyor General's office and other Government established and even private travellers could rarely move in the hills unaided in this respect by the



superintendent. All that is left of the Baboo's grievance in that particular and for this he and the coolies alike had a legal channel of redress is that his own coolies or servants were seized.

4th. Allowing the full value of the testimony given by the witness brought the Baboo, his servants, and other to prove the fact of those paharees having been part of the Baboo's establishment, there is to my mind on a careful consideration of the evidence as strong presumption that the coolies whether Baboo Radhanauth's servants, or not, did of their own will agree with the police people to carry the baggage; two Dahyathe shopkeepers, depose to this. The coolies were proceeding unattended closely by Barkandazes to pass the Baboo's house till ordered up by him. All the police examined who state their order are never to take loaded or engaged labourers, depose to this fact, and I am bound to say that the Baboo in the cross examination to which he subjected these Paharees severely damaged by the answers he extracted, his own case and the trust worthiness of their depositions.

I have had a doubt as to whether it was the intention of the court to enable Mr. Vansitart to amend through me his previous orders and if he (once cancelled) for the contempt of court although I make no doubt that such contempt might be proved. I have therefore not passed any sentence on that score. It was a separate case requiring a separate investigation and order, while the illegal detention and refused to obey the magistrate's order comprehend the whole case sufficiently. But I find Baboo Radhanauth guilty upon the fullest proof, of illegal seizure and detention of the property of Mr. Vansitart, Superintendent of Dehra Doon and of Captain Patterson, and of defying the police and refusing Mr. Vansitart's order as magistrate given before witnesses and in presence of the police. And I think this under-arrogating of authority and illegal exercise of judicial authority to be criminal under the spirit and letter of every regulation upon the subject from those of 1793 downwards and that section XXVI regulation XX 1817, and its provisions warrant my

order : and as the Baboo is tenacious of his opinion as to the right he had to seize and obtain property not his own, and to take the law into his own hands in presence of an authorized magistrate and as such opinions if not renunciated are likely be productive of the most serious inconveniences, public and private, I sentence him to pay a fine of two hundred rupees or to imprisonment of six months.

As none of the witnesses speak to any abuse given or act done by Messers Clarkson & Keelan which would make them guilty of the charge brought, I acquit them, though they had by breach of the peace resulted or violence with the police arising out of the circumstances proved, their presence as friends of Baboo Radhanauth Sikder and with in hearing of the illegal orders witnessed the opposition he gave to legal authority, would have undoubtedly involved them in what might have been a still more serious charge.

(Signed)

G.F. Harvey.

Magistrate of Saharunpur.

August 15th 1843.

I am bound in conclusion to remark that Mr. Vansitart in his Judgement has shown considerable moderation and temper in the matter of these proceedings. Few magistrates would have submitted to the open defiance of the orders, such was given by the Baboo ; while to proceed to enforce them might have produced a collision which would undoubtedly have left the Baboo in a more serious predicament than he now occupies, and would have been unseemly and to be avoided on every account. Mr. Vansitart seeking redress from the Baboo's official superior Colonel Everest in the first instance was therefore I am convinced right and proper.

(Signed)

G.F. Harvey

Magistrate of Saharunpur.

In reading this decision we cannot but express our persuasion that it is marked throughout by a manifestation of the irrepressible and lamentable esprit decorps on the part of Mr. Harvey. He was not trying the case as between one man and another, which is the duty of the ministers of justice to keep distinctly in view, in the performance of their responsible and sacred duties, that they may be in no way influenced in their judgement, but as between a powerful and high crested member of his exclusive order, whose dignity should always be preserved inviolated, and a Black Native, whose grievances it was comparatively immaterial to enquire into. From the commencement of the trial down to its conclusion, Baboo Radhanauth appears to have met with every impediment in the endeavours he made to obtain justice. He put in several objections, and made several prayers from time to time with reference to the subject of the suit and to all of which almost Mr. Harvey turned a deaf ear often observing as to their irregularities. The Baboo was equally unsuccessful in exercising a degree of freedom in cross examining witnesses—right allowed to defendants by every English court our readers will see, by the following extracts from the report how the Baboo was treated in exjoining the benefit of that right.

When a Thana Barkandaze, a witness on the side of Mr. Vansitart was deposing to the account of a conversation which had taken place between that gentleman and Colonel Everest, Mr. Harvey interrupted him. Baboo Radhanauth begged that the deponent might be allowed to proceed "Hold your tongue", said Mr. Harvey to the Baboo "You are not to dictate me—the man is not to speak as he pleases, and upon hear say."

Again when a Paharee cited by Mr. Vansitart as his witness was giving his evidence Baboo Radhanauth enquired whether he understood the conversation, he (the Baboo) had not the police Jamadar, the deponent answering in the negative—Baboo Radhanauth "How do you know I was employing abusive expression towards the Jamadar? Mr. Harvey. There is no native from here to Cuttuck who does not

comprehend abusive language though he might not understand your talking."

Again when Emamuddin was disposing that he had sold grass to Mr. Keelan and been directed to give that grass to Mr. Keelan's servants and that the witness could recognize the servants in the Paharees attending at the court, Mr. Vansitart remarked "Harvey, this man has perjured himself. It was from his evidence I had concluded that the Paharees were not in the employment of the defendants at the first trial. I beg you will order him to produce his books" when questioned, Emamuddin declared that he was exactly deposing on the present occasion what he had stated at the formal trial.

Emamuddin is a short fat man and a dealer in grass at Rajpur.

Again when one of the Paharees who had carried Mr. Vansitart's baggage on the 5th of May was giving evidence, Baboo Radhanauth enquired whether he did not bear marks of violence on his person that date. "I will not allow the witness to reply to that question" interrupted Mr. Harvey "if the man has received illtreatment from any of the Thana Barkundazes he can lodge a complaint in the proper court and it will be investigated into. I am now only trying you on the true charge preferred against you by Mr. Vansitart".

Again when Kareem Bux was giving evidence that two of the Paharees who had been burdened with Mr. Vansitart's loads on the 5th day of May bore marks of caning on their bodies, Mr. Harvey expressed his surprise that none of the Paharees had deposed to that circumstance: Where upon Baboo Radhanauth observed "why you would not allow me to question and cross examine the Paharees on this part?"

The Baboo was not also allowed to make any remarks in further defence of himself before the passing of the sentence, although he expressed a wish to do so. The Judgement of Mr. Harvey as per as it is commendatory of Baboo Radhanauth, appears to possess neither the strength of reason nor the sanction of law. Supposing Baboo was aware of Mr.



Vansitart's identity as a Magistrate, what harm there in asking for a written purwanna for the delivery of the goods ? When Mr. Vansitart knew and declared that he himself was the owner of the goods, he could not be considered in any other light than that of a private individual, and he was unlawful on his part to exercise magisterial authority in a case of which he was concerned, where then was the illegality or disobedience of the Baboo ? The Baboo does not appear to have a purwanna written in an official form and duly sealed. A receipt in the English language executed before a couple of witness would, we suppose have answered the purpose just as well, and we must say it would have been better if the Baboo had left it to the option of Mr. Vansitart to grant a purwanna of a receipt. If the purwanna could not be sent owing to the absence of the seal and the Amla, why was the circumstance not to be mentioned ? And if after this intimation and that of sustaining further inconvenience by the legal detention of the goods, the Baboo did not modify his request as to adopt it to present circumstances, without bringing any material disadvantage to himself, he might then be open to blame.

But circumstances as it was, we see, nothing improper in him asking for a document from a regard to self indemnification, and for the purpose of the self establishment of his grievances, arising from the impressment of and oppression over his Paharees in a court of justice. Admitting that Mr. Vansitart could exercise his magisterial authority in the case under notice, how could he pass orders on a matter of judicial cognizance without holding proceedings ? His order to arrest the Baboo for he not wishing to deliver goods without purwanna was like that of an autocrat. A Magistrate retains his judicial authority while on the bench. We question very much whether he carries it in his pocket wherever he wanders. Foeshis court move with him like his shadow, that his verbal orders passed at random should be binding as his written orders ?

Again Mr. Harvey finds the Baboo guilty of undue



arrogation of authority and illegal exercise of judicial powers under the spirit and letter of every regulation upon the subject from those of 1793 and downwards, and that Section XXVI Regulation XX, 1817 warrants his order. The first condition is vague. Let us see how far the second is applicable. Section XXVI Regulation XX, 1817 has two clauses, viz. I and V bearing on the subject. The purpose of the first is that persons resisting processes shall be apprehended and sent to the magistrate and that of the fifth that in all instances resistance to the process of the magistrate for police officer the magistrate has the discretion to and judge a fine not exceeding two hundred rupees, committable, if not paid to imprisonment not more than six months for the offence. Now where the resistance to process? Were any "process" served on the Baboo for the delivery of the goods? No. Mr. Harvey converts.

Mr. Vansitart's dictum in to a process and thus satisfy his amiable love towards a member of his own fraternity. That the civilians are actuated by a spirit of clanship, as men of all exclusive orders, is what did not escape the penetrating mind of Lord Williams Bentinck. That illustrious statesman in his minute state of the civil service, dated 10th November, 1831 speaking of its disadvantages says, in all (exclusive orders; "will be found the same disposition to view with satisfaction things as they are; the same indulgent towards the errors of members of the same community and the want of that exertion generally which rivalry and competition can alone excite". We therefore repeat that this is a disadvantage under which the country will suffer as long as the service is maintained. If the objects of the "merit fostering minute" had been strictly acted upon, under efficient and disinterested supervision, the evil would no doubt have been checked to a great extent, but under the present circumstances, it cannot but operate against the dispersion of justice in cases such as the under review.

## IV

### OTHER DOCUMENTS

1. Town Hall Meeting on January 5, 1835  
Criticising Charter Act of 1833.
2. Birth of the Deshutaishunee Shubah,  
October, 1841.
3. Address of the Committee of the Edinburgh Emancipation and Aborigines Protection Society to Dwarakanauth Tagore on September 8, 1842.

# TOWN HALL MEETING ON JANUARY 5, 1835

## CRITICISING CHARTER ACT OF 1833\*

### *Petition for Convening the Meeting*

To the Sheriff of Calcutta

Sir,

We the undersigned request that you will convene a general meeting of the inhabitants of Calcutta at an early day to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning the Governor-General in Council on the Legislative Council of India to repeal the Press Regulation passed in 1824 and to remove the restraints upon public meetings and also of petitioning the British Parliament upon the subject of said Act passed for renewing the Company's charter.

We are Sir your  
obedient servants,

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\*Liberals of all trends in Calcutta held a big meeting in the Town Hall on January 5, 1835, criticising the Charter Act of 1833 and demanding the repeal of the Press Regulation of 1824. Russick Krishna Mullick, a young Derozian and a journalist of repute gave a militant speech in the meeting that has been reprinted in full here from a special Supplement of *Bengal Hurkaru*, January 6, 1835 and which was subsequently printed as a pamphlet by Samuel Sillen and Co., Calcutta containing the full report of the meeting. [Ed]

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| 1. Prasanna Coomar Tagore  | 18. Srikissen Sing          |
| 2. Rustomjee Cowasjee      | 19. Horri Mohun Bose        |
| 3. Russick Krishna Mullick | 20. Nab Kissen Banerjee     |
| 4. Dwaraka Nath Tagore     | 21. Radha Prasad Roy        |
| 5. Colly Nauth Roy         | 22. Chunder Shekhar Dey     |
| 6. Asutosh Dey             | 23. Uoodoychand Dutt        |
| 7. Pramatha Nath Dey       | 24. Isser Chunder Mukherjee |
| 8. Radha Kissen Mitter     | 25. Harish Chundur Sen      |
| 9. Hurro Chunder Bose      | 26. Srinuth Mukherjee       |
| 10. David Hare             | 27. Shama Churan Sen        |
| 11. Shama Churan Bose      | 28. Raj Kissore Sen         |
| 12. Russomoy Dutt          | 29. Ramchund Banerjee       |
| 13. D. C. Paul             | 30. T. E. M. Turton         |
| 14. Mahesh Chunder Dutt    | 31. T. Dickens              |
| 15. Rupnarayan Goopta      | 32. J. Sutherland           |
| 16. Madhusudan Mitter      | 33. E. M. Gordon            |
| 17. Radha Madhab Banerjee  | And many others.            |

Calcutta, Dec. 27, 1834.

*Russick Krishna Mullick's Speech on the Charter Act of 1833,  
(at the Calcutta Town Hall Meeting, 5 January, 1835)*

Gentlemen,

In rising to second the resolution just proposed by Mr. Dickens, I must beg you to excuse any inaccuracy there may be in my mode of expressing my sentiments. I have to address you in a language foreign to me, foreign to the country which gave me birth and this must plead my apology. Before proceeding to the immediate question I must call your attention to one point to which I feel it necessary to allude. It may have been expected that the natives would be prepared to come forward and defend themselves against certain attacks which have been made upon the native Press. The natives were prepared to defend themselves if the persons who made these attacks had the boldness to come forward at this meeting and proposed any amendment to the resolutions but as

that has not been done, the natives did not consider themselves entitled to occupy your time to repel an attack which has not been followed up (loud cheers).

Gentlemen, Mr. Dickens has drawn attention to some of the most important defects in the new act of the Parliament ; and certainly after a careful perusal of it, however much it may have been intended for the better govt. of His Majesty's Indian territory, I cannot come to the conclusion that the clauses contained in it do in any way tend to their better govt. (cheers). The more I have perused it, the more I have perceived that the motive which guided those who passed it was - self (cheers). It was passed not for the benefit of India but for the benefit of the proprietors of Indian stock and the benefit of the people of England while the welfare of the millions who inhabit these vast regions were not at all cared for (cheers).

Mr. Dickens has directed your attention to the commercial debts of the company being paid out of the territorial revenues. I think that unjust and it shows the British Parliament were looking to the interests of the proprietors of the East India stock and not to those of the inhabitants of this country (loud cheers). We were already burdened with a heavy debt and yet the British Parliament entail upon us an additional burden to pay the commercial debts of the company. It should have been considered whether those commercial debts could with propriety be paid out of the revenues of this country. If they were incurred through the folly and mismanagement of the servants of the company, the burden should have fallen upon them and not upon us. I shall not detain you longer upon this point or go over the ground Mr. Dickens has already traversed, but there are one or two points he has omitted and to which I as a native must be allowed to advert (loud cheers). I will first allude to that clauses in the act by which the ecclesiastical establishment of this country has been increased. I think a greater injustice could not have been committed (loud cheers). I know there are many who defend this and who say that the civil and military



servants require ministers to preach to them. It may be so and it may be hard to deprive them of that blessing. But why should the revenue of this country taken from the hard earnings of the poor of India wretchedly fed and clothed, be devoted to the purpose of extending a religion, which the natives feel to be destructive both of their temporal and eternal happiness? (loud cheers). There might be some excuse if the objects were merely a provision for the eternal interests of the company's civil and military servants, but there is something more. It is said in the act "provided always that nothing herein contained shall be so constitute has to prevent the Governor-General in Council from granting from time to time with the sanction of the Court of Directors and of the Commissioners for the affairs of India to any sect persuasion or community of Christian not being of the United Church of England and Ireland or of the church of Scotland such sums of money as may be expedient for the purpose of instruction or for the maintainance of places of worship." What does that mean, but that money is to be taken out of the hands of the natives to convert them to faith which they consider to be wrong, which they consider to be detrimental to their salvation? Is it just? Is it right? Is it in accordance with the precepts of that religion of which they boast so much? I have not found one word in their sacred book which warrants them to wrench money from the hand of an unwilling man, to convert him to a faith which he believes to be wrong (loud cheers). So much with respect to that clause but there are others which as a native I must notice. It has been asked (not here but elsewhere) if there is anything in the act to which a rational Englishman can object. Not being an Englishman I cannot judge the feelings of Englishman but I do see a great deal to which I, as a rational native of India do object (cheers and laughter). It is asked if natives are to object to that clause by which all persons, of whatever religion and colour, are rendered eligible to office under the Govt. Certainly not. But let us enter a little deeply into that question and we shall find that though such a clause is inserted, there are other things

which render it nugatory (cheers). I allude to the necessity of education at the Haleybury College, an institution which from what I have heard of it, I should think the sooner it is abolished the better for all parties (cheers). The best schools for those who are to hold office in India, is India itself (cheers). All the lessons they receive at Haleybury can lead them but little to a practical acquaintance with the wants and feelings of the people of India. It must be by communicating with the natives by speaking with them by entering the wretched hovels that any man can acquire that knowledge without which his best intention will be in vain (cheers). This is an objection to the college upon general grounds, but I will show that the clause has the effect of rendering utterly nugatory that other clause which makes the natives eligible to office. However, one may regret the prejudice, still the natives entertain prejudice that it is sinful for them to cross the ocean, much more to remain in England for years for the purpose of tuition. That being so how can a native qualify himself to office? He must either give up his worldly prospect or his religion (loud cheers). It is another question whether the Hindus are sufficiently advanced to be entrusted with high office but why this prejudice exists, if the legislature intended that clause to mean nothing at all, they ought to have made some other provisions to enable the natives to enter the civil service (loud cheers).

Gentlemen, the more I read this act the more I am convinced the interests of the people of England were alone thought of. It has been said that tea monopoly has been abolished and is that a measure to which we can object? No. But why was the tea monopoly abolished? For the welfare of the people of India? No. Only for the welfare of the people of England. If our welfare was thought of, why was not the monopoly of salt and opium abolished? (loud cheers). Mr. Charles Grant has promised to do away with it but when his promise will be fulfilled, heaven knows; I cannot say (cheers & laughter). Allusion has been made to the absolute power of the Gover

nor General and Mr. Dickens has shown me that he is more absolute than the kings of England in their worst days. What check is there upon him ? If this petition succeeds, we may have one check (cheers) but the Parliament has taken from us one that already existed. The Supreme Court has always been a check and that is now taken away. The Supreme Court is put under the power of the Governor-General and to borrow words which have been written in one of the journals of the city "British Judges whose independence is our pride and our glory are reduced to be mere administrators of possibly inconcerted and illconsidered laws" (cheers). Mr. Dickens has also alluded to the commercial interests of this country. In vain do I look for any clause that speaks of the removal of the restrictions under which Indian commerce labours, had been removed, whether this country would not have flourished and increased in wealth and power far more than it has done (loud cheers). There is another subject to which we hoped but hoped in vain, the British Parliament would have given some attention. In this act there is not one word about the subject of education (cheers). Two additional bishops have been provided for the comfort of the civil and military servants but there is no provision whatever for the education of the people of India (loud cheers). Gentlemen, what are the conclusions at which we must arrive from this state of things ? Read the act over and over again and you will find the truth of my remarks, however, badly they have been delivered (cheers). I do humbly submit that we should petition the legislature to remove some of the most obnoxious clauses.

[ *Bengal Hurkaru*, 6th January 1835. ]

BIRTH OF THE  
DESHUTAISHUNEE SHUBAH  
OCTOBER 1841\*

In pursuance of an advertisement in the Prabhakar newspaper, a public meeting of native gentlemen was held on Sunday afternoon last, in Kubur Denga, at the premises of the late Baboo Comul Bose for the purpose of taking into consideration the best means of ameliorating their political condition. It was convened by the conductors of the Native Press, and was numerous and respectably attended. The transactions of the society were carried on through the medium of the Bengalee dialect, and several resolutions were passed unanimously ; among which the following seem to us to be the most important.

1st. That the society unite and co-operate with the British India Society for the attainment of its objects.

2nd. That an English journal be established to advocate the rights of the natives.

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\* The urge to form a political association for advocating the cause of the Indians was felt strongly by the Young Bengal and other reformers even in the thirties of the Nineteenth Century. In October 1841 that urge took a more concrete shape in the birth of a patriotic association called the Deshutaishunee Shubah in Calcutta. Proceedings of that meeting including the resolutions passed there and the full texts of the speech of Saroda Prosaud Ghose, a pupil of Derozio and then a Headmaster of a local school was printed in the *Bengal Hurkaru* and subsequently reprinted in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, November, 1841. This selection is taken from the version appearing in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal*. [ Ed. ]

3rd. That a petition be sent to the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain for the redresses of their grievances.

4th. That all men, without distinction of colors, creed or sect, be admitted into the society.

5th. That twenty-four gentlemen be annually chosen to constitute the Managing Committee.

After the resolutions were carried into effect, twenty-four members were elected to compose the Managing Committee for the present year ; which gentlemen, in estimation of the society, were in every way deemed competent to hold the office. At the conclusion, a Bengalee translation of an address, written in English by Baboo Saroda Prosaud Ghose, was read into meeting by Baboo Greesh Chundra Banerjee. We subjoin the original. The meeting dissolved at about 8 P. M. after a sitting of upwards of four hours. We must not omit to state, that the society is denominated "Deshu-taishunee Shubah", which signifies the society for the Amelioration of India.

#### *Speech of Saroda Prosaud Ghose*

"Friends and countrymen,—you are assembled here for the purpose of considering the means of ameliorating condition of your countrymen. To a man, born in this country, and having the prosperity of his countrymen in his heart, this subject cannot, but be one of paramount importance and utmost interest. Had I not been impressed with a conviction of the mighty importance of the topic, I would not have presumed to address you on the present occasion, for no one in this meeting is more fully sensible of his inability to handle the theme, than I am.

Ever since the commencement of the supremacy in this country, the policy of our present rulers has been to deprive us of the enjoyment of political liberty. This is a fact welknown to everyone who views their administration in its effects upon our condition. There are very many circumstances which tend to corroborate the truth of my assertion ;



but I shall be satisfied with the mention of one, since that alone will be sufficient for my purpose. The administration of the supreme Govt. of this country, has few years since, been entrusted to the hands of six gentlemen, who compose the council of India. These gentlemen enact laws for the government of millions of human beings, who acknowledge subjection to British Sway, without taking their opinion as to the tendency of those laws which purport to be conducive to their welfare. We are thus rendered ignorant of what passes within the council chamber; and hence is the reason that we are so often governed by laws, which have a pernicious tendency to occasion and perpetuate our political degradation. Since we have no hand in the constitution of this country,—and since nothing binds the Governor-General in Council to govern us by law conducive to our prosperity if, therefore, sound, just and equitable laws be now and then enacted for our government, their enactment would be attributed to our fortune and to the good sense and liberal disposition of their enactors. Why did Warren Hastings rule us with an iron hand, and Lord William Bentick govern us in a contrary manner? Because the former was a tyrant, and the latter a good and wise governor. This being the case, can it be possibly expected, that the administration of our present rulers will ever enable us to rise in the scale of political greatness? No. History, to which the ultimate appeal is made on questions of this nature, furnishes one with abundant examples for the corroboration of the truth of my assertion. Let me, however, borrow one for my purpose. We say, that the people of England enjoy political liberty in the fullest extent. It may naturally be asked—from what time can their enjoyment of that liberty be dated? To this query it can be answered,—from the very time the House of Commons which represent the bulk of the people of England, has had a hand in the enactment of laws relative to the management of the affair of the nation. From this it becomes evident that a country can not possibly occupy a prominent station in the scale of political greatness, unless

its people possess a share in the administration of its government.

Our deprivation of the enjoyment of political liberty is the cause of our misery and degradation. The losses of happiness follows the losses of civil liberty, as shadow does substance. This is a principle which has been received as an axiom of political science. There are so many historical instances which tend to demonstrate the soundness of the principle, that a bare recital of theme will occupy a volume of no ordinary size. I shall, therefore, confine myself to one, which is at once glaring and convincing. There was a time when the Romans were scarcely known as a nation to the ancients. There was also a time when their dominion gradually began to widen till it extended itself over the whole of the then known world. There was a likewise time when there glory "drop from the zenith like a falling star." When did the Roman Empire begin to rise ? At the time the Govt. of the Roman began to assume a regular form. When did it make a rapid progress ? At the time the greater body of the people enjoyed political rights and privileges. When did it fall down at once ? At the time a chaotic confusion prevailed in the constitution of the nation, and the mass of the people lost their civil liberty. Does not this example alone tend to prove the truth of my assertion, that the misery and degradation of a people are to be dated from the moment they lose their civil and political liberty ?

Talking of our present rulers, the distinguished author of the "Pleasures of Hope", with the laudable spirit of one who is devoid of national prejudices, paints their character with glowing but faithful colors in the following verses :—

"Did peace descend, to triumph and to save  
When free born Britons cross'd the Indian wave ?  
Ah, no !—no more than Rome's ambition true,  
The Nurse of Freedom gave it not to you !  
She the hold route of Europe's guilt began  
And, in the march of nations, led the van !  
Rich in the germs of Indians gaudy zone,

And plunder pil'd from kingdoms not their art,  
Degenerate trade ! they minions could despise  
The heart-ban anguish of a thousand cries !  
Could lock, with impious hands their teeming store,  
While famished nations died along the shore ;  
Could nock the groans of fellow-men and bear  
The curse of kingdom peopl'd with despair !  
Could stamp disgrace on man's polluted name,  
And barter, with their gold, eternal shame !"

This picture of the character of our present rulers, however vivid can not be pronounced to be false, as it has been drawn by one who, in its delineation, was influenced by nothing else but a regard to truth, and who has observed their treatment of the natives, free from those prejudices which might be supposed to bias his judgement in matters connected with the well-being of his countrymen. Our present rulers pay a superstitious adoration to mammon, and scruple to adopt any means by which they can enrich themselves, and reduce us to squallid poverty. Need I undertake the painful task of harrowing up your tender feelings by an enumeration of all the instances of the grinding oppression exercised over us ? No ; because they are too numerous to be detailed before you, and too glaring to escape your observation. I shall therefore, be content with mentioning one, which I believe, will be quite sufficient to give you a correct idea of the unwarrantable cruelty which our present rulers are exercising over us. Look at the Resumption Act ;—think on what frivolous pretext it has been passed ; reflect what amount of evil it has done to those who are suffering from it ; and then consider whether what I have already advanced is right or otherwise.

Such being the nature of the constitution of this country, are we not prompted by all that is dear to man to adopt measures calculated to improve our condition ? None here present will, I am confident, answer me in the negative. I have, accordingly, taken the liberty of submitting to your liberal consideration. What, in my humble opinion, appear

to be the most feasible means of effecting a change in our degraded condition. The means alluded to, are as follows :—

First—Have union among yourselves. Speaking of the benefit of unanimity even in the devils, to work the moral fall of man, the sublime and lofty-minded author of the "Paradise Lost" says :—

"O shame to men : devil with devil damind  
Firm concord holds, men only disagree  
Of creature rational, though under hope  
Of heavenly grace ; and, God proclaiming peace.  
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife,  
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,  
Wasting the Earth, each other to destroy,  
As if ( which might induce us to accord )  
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,  
That, day and night, for his destruction wait."

In composing these lines, the author had in view the civil war which, in his time, raged with uncommon fury in England ; and they strongly express the disgust which he felt at the painful circumstances. If, therefore, there would be found to means, the writer would be delighted to see peace and unanimity prevail among his countrymen. If the question were put, why was the poet of this opinion ? It would be immediately answered, because union is the great basis upon which the mighty fabric of civil and political greatness is raised. Union is essential to the existence of a nation as body politic as good is to the preservation of life. Can you possibly show to me a country, of people of which without having union among themselves, have risen in the scale of prosperity and civil greatness, distinguished themselves either in the literary or in the scientific world, enjoyed peace and order at home, and extended their dominion abroad ? No. Many ingenuous arguments can be adduced in corroboration of the truth of this observation ; but there is a safer and surer way of proving its validity, by a reference to facts. Take a glance at the map of the world ;—cast your retrospective eye over the pages of ancient history ;—and fix your attention to



what occurred in Athens and Sparta. These Grecian Republics, with a handful of troops, defeated and subsequently expelled from Greece the almost countless Persian army commanded by Darius, Artaxerxes and Xerxes. They gave to mankind the most striking instances of their bravery, their mental strength, their skill in tactics, and distinguished themselves as the greatest and most powerful of all nations that the energetic author of the "Child Harold" writes the following beautiful and impressive lines ;

"The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece !  
Where burning sappho loved and sung,  
Where grew the arts of war and peace  
Where Delos rose and Phoebus sprung !"

But look at the state of Athens and Sparta at a subsequent period of their history. In this case you can not expect to meet what has already been said of them. No, the picture is reversed and you see nothing but what is degrading in human nature. The Athenians and the Spartans became degenerated ; they no longer figured themselves as great and distinguished people, they lost their courage, their mental energy, their power, their prosperity, their political liberty, and all that is dear to man ! Behold the ancient greatness of Greece ; turn your view to her subsequent degradation ; and then ask to yourselves what was the cause which produced the deplorable effect ? You can not find any difficulty in ascertaining this. The Grecians were great when they were united as one body ; they were degraded when they were disunited as so many separate and distinct bodies. Does not this single instance, remarkable and striking as it is, speak volumes in support of the argument, that union is strength, and disunion weakens, and have I not thus attempted to prove, that, without unanimity among yourselves, all your exertions to effect a salutary change in your condition, will be vain and ineffectual ?

Secondly,—Love your country. We have been represented by foreigners as a people devoid of Patriotism. How far this sweeping accusation is well grounded it is not my



business to determine ; but I wish that we could silence the tongues of our accusers by the performance of liberal acts of public utility. I would not insult your understandings by attempting to recommend to you the possession of patriotism, for who among you knowing not that is a virtue of a superior order, in the exercise of which you are bound to by all that is held sacred by us ? But what I mean to state, as suiting my purpose on the present occasion, is simply this, that patriotism is absolutely necessary to give effect to union, and to direct it to the proper channel of national usefulness, without patriotism, union becomes a source of mischiefs ; with it, it conduces to good, in the same manner, as when a sword is wielded by a ruffian, it does injury to society, when it is in the hand of a patriot, it is employed in the cause of truth and justice. History mentions, that Pausanius, a Spartan chief, and some of his followers, were united, but for what purpose ? Not for advancing the welfare of his countrymen, (as one would be disposed to imagine) but for betraying them into the hands of Xerxes, the Persian king, and the ancient and implacable enemy of Greece, provided he would give him daughter in marriage ? Did not unanimity in Pausanius and his men become a mighty instrument of evil to his country ; and would not the friend of humanity therefore, have wished, that no such union had prevailed among them ? Yes must be the reply of every one here present. On the other hand, Hampden, illustrious and ever memorable Hampden, who has, by way of distinction, been so justly called the patriot, united with certain number of Englishmen, not out of mean selfishness, but of a regard for the public interest ; not to the prejudice of his countrymen, but to their immediate advantage ; not for being instrumental to the tyranny of their reigning despot of England, but for putting a stop to his cruelty and oppression. It is for this reason, that the celebrated author of the "Seasons", in congratulating himself with his native country for producing a host of intellectually as well as morally great men, and in taking notice of some of those distinguished

personage, writers the following soul—affecting lines to the memory of Hampden.

“A Hampden, too, is thine, illustrious land,  
Wise, strenuous firm, of unsubmitting soul,  
Who stemmed the torrent of a drownward age,  
To slavery prone, and bade thee rise again,  
In all thy native pomp of freedom bold,  
Bright at his call, they age of men effulged,  
Of men on whom late time a kindling eye,  
Shall turn, and tyrant tremble while they read”.

Now, it was asked, why was the union of Hampden and his followers desirable, any why did it become a source of blessing to England? It would be answered because he was a lover of his country. While on this subject, I can remain silent without mentioning the instance of America. That country was once a wilderness, barren of all that is ennobling in man! But what was America now become? The land (be it recorded to the glory of the Americans) of liberty, a country dear to fame! a soil that has been peculiarly adapted for intellectual as well as moral culture! In a word, the Americans have become one of the greatest nations now in existence! What is the cause that has produced a salutary change in the condition of the once barbarous and degraded Americans? Because they were united in a body, out of motive for the promotion of the prosperity of their country. From these few and common place observations, does it not appear evident, that my position is not altogether untenable?

Thirdly, unite and co-operate with the “British India Society”. You are all, I believe, aware, that the object which has called the society into existence, is the improvement of our degraded condition. The means, which the originators of the institution have adopted for the accomplishment of the object, is the exposition of the principles which guide the operations of the local government of the country. That the object, is truly laudable, and that the means restored to, is best calculated to effect it, none here present can, I am confident deny, for from what has our misery proceeded

but from the oppression of our rulers, and what can remove our distress but the opening of the eyes of the British Parliament to the manner in which their govt. is administered ? I am of opinion that it is for encouragement and co operation ; and you would, certainly, ill-discharge the duty you owe to your country, of elevating her in the scale of prosperity, if you do not extend your support to the institution. But there is a higher and more cogent reason for which you ought to join and co-operate with a society. The society is composed of gentleness, the principal of whom is no less a man than the great and illustrious Lord Brougham. He is a man whose very name is his monument, and who is born to be the ornament and glory, not only of England, but of the world at large. He has mastered almost every department of knowledge, and his philanthropy extends itself to the poles. It is difficult which to praise most, his learned head, or his good heart, so equally are both of them balanced. He has applied his almost boundless talents to their right use, by employing them in the cause of humanity. He is who is the president of a society, called the "Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge", which, as its name indicates, has been set on foot for diffusing sound and useful knowledge among his own countrymen and mankind in general ; who has, with his wonted zeal and ability, advocated the cause of the Eastern Slave Trade in the Parliament, who has been instrumental in causing the fetters of slavery to fall off from the limbs of the Negro ; and who has been heartily engaged in vindicating our political rights and privileges. Add to this, his opinions carry weight in the British Parliament among the English nation at large. It would be a mere waste of words to speak minutely of every other gentleman of the "British India Society" ; suffice it to say, that all of them are learned, distinguished, influential, and philanthropic individuals. When such men as these are warmly engaged in advocating our cause, can we not reasonably indulge a hope, that our grievances may be removed ? Yes, we can, or, if they fail to afford us redress,

can expect it from any other man or class of men ? No. We can not. Hence arises the utility and absolute necessity of our joining and cooperating with the "British India Society".

Fourthly,—Let those among you, who conduct the Native Press (which is the same thing), who edit the Bengalee newspapers, afford their aid in the glorious cause in which all of you are engaged. I know the talents and virtues of those gentlemen ; I know the ability with which they are editing their Papers ; I know the strenuous exertions they are making for the promotion of the prosperity of their country ; I know the eminent success which has attended, their attempts to awaken a spirit of enquiry in their countrymen and I know the influence which their writings are exercising upon the improvement of those for whose benefit their journals have been established—I say I know all these things ; and, from my knowledge of them, I conclude, by the process of inductive reasoning, that a great deal can be expected from those gentlemen for the improvement of our degraded condition. I, therefore, wish that they would preserve in their efforts to ameliorate the state of their country ; for it is a lesson which we have learnt from our infancy, that success is the fruit of perseverance. But in what way are their efforts to be directed ? It is not difficult to set ourselves right in this point ; for a few moments reflection will enable us so to do. They are to write continually on political subjects, pointing out the evils of the Govt. together with the means by which those evils can be remedied ; in the same manner as the gentlemen of the "British India Society" are doing at present. As in the case of natural body, the medicine administered for the cause of the disease, should be according to the nature of that disease, otherwise it cannot produce the intended effect ; so with respect to the body politics, the bore, which excavates its vitals, requires for being healed, plaster adequate for the purpose, else it will continue to injure the system. Therefore, as our misery has proceeded from the oppression of the Govt. so, in order to remove our grievances,



a stop should be put to that oppression, and this can be effected by the said gentlemen writing on political subjects in the manner above alluded to. But that their political sentiments may be spread far and wide, not only in this country, but also in England, and that by this means we may derive greater good. I wish that those among you who have an intimate acquaintance with Bengalee and English (and I know there are many gentlemen here present who have a respectable knowledge of both the languages) would translate their writings into English, and then let them be published in that garb in English papers.

Fifthly and lastly, Represent your grievances to the British Parliament and apply to that august assembly for redress. You do not, like the brave and noble minded Americans aspire as high as to free yourselves from the yoke of the British sway ; To take in your own hands the reigns of government and to display in the world striking instances of your courage exerted in the cause of your independence. No, your aspiration is by far much humbler ; you only desire that you may be freed from the tyranny and oppression of the local government of this country ; and that consequently that a salutary change may be effected in your present degraded condition. Your wishes may be realised by your sending to the Parliament a petition through an agent which will contain a faithful statement of your sufferings, accompanied with an earnest entreaty for a removal of them. The affairs of India awaken interest not only in the members of the Parliament but also in the British nation at large. Every matter connected with our prosperity is taken by them into serious consideration, and they adopt measures which are calculated to promote our welfare. A few years, since when the Resumption Act was made known to them, what a deep interest, did it excite in them ; into what serious consideration was it taken by them ; with what scrutiny, nicety, ability and impartiality, were both its merits and demerits canvassed by them and what has been the result ? A great deal of the severity of the Act has been mitigated and there is a fair way of its being repealed



at once. While on this subject, I shall not omit to mention, another auspicious circumstances ; and it is this—as I have already mentioned, the gentlemen of the "British India Society" are of our firmest friends and the warmest supporters of our cause. Liberally disposed as the British India Society, the British constitution and the British nation at large are towards us, and experiencing as we have several tokens of kindness from them, is there neither possibility nor probability of their doing, at least something for our grievances be represented to them in the manner above alluded to ? Yes ; there is, I have I believe, thus endeavoured to show to you that you ought to follow what has already been suggested.

I have thus brought, though in a clumsy and an imperfect manner my short address to a conclusion. I have submitted to your liberal consideration the means, which my immature judgement and limited knowledge have suggested to be for the improvement of your degraded condition, you may either adopt them, as conducing to the end or reject them, for a contrary reason, and think of better ones for the same object, just as your sound sense dictates to you. I am not so anxious to see those means adopted which I have stated above, as to behold my long neglected country, rise in the scale of prosperity. It is my constant and devout prayer to the supreme disposer of all, that His boundless and unutterable Grace may crown with success your exertions to effect a salutary change in your condition. I have done, and therefore, beg to resume to my seat.

[ *Bengal Hurkaru*, October 6, 1841.  
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Address of the  
COMMITTEE OF THE EDINBURGH EMANCIPATION  
AND ABORIGINES PROTECTION SOCIETY  
TO  
DWARAKANAUTH TAGORE  
ZEMINDER OF CALCUTTA\*

Respected Fellow Citizen and Sir,

You see before you the Committee of Society originally organised to promote the extinction of Negro Slavery in the West Indies and still engaged in efforts for the overthrow of slavery and the slave trade throughout the world.

For several years the Edinburgh Society has devoted a portion of its attention to the claims of our fellow subjects, the natives of your country. In doing this we have been actuated by a sincere desire to aid in well directed endeavours to improve the social condition of the many millions in the East, brought under British rule and to obtain for your brethren the advantages guaranteed but not yet bestowed by the Charter Act of 1833.

As the friends and advocates of personal freedom, we have from time to time considered the nature, extent and peculiarities as it exists under various forms in our Indian possessions and in connection with this branch of this subject, the practicability of superseding the use of slave-grown produce from

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\* Dwarakanauth Tagore, friend of Rammuhan was himself a leading liberal of the age. In England he supported the demands of the embryonic nationalist forces of India, primarily represented by the Young Bengal in Calcutta. The liberals and radicals of Britain who sympathised with the aspirations of the Indians and other colonial peoples, gave warm welcome to Dwarakanauth. The present selection is the evidence of one such significant reception. The original scroll is preserved by the Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta. [Ed.]

other countries by the extension and encouragement of free agricultural pursuits throughout British India.

We have on several occasions exerted ourselves to prevent the natives of India from becoming the victims of deception and fraud under the operation of what is known to us by the name of the Hill Coolie Emigration System. We have also laboured to disseminate the information we have been able to obtain relative to the nature and working of the different system of land revenue in India some of which we believe to be injurious, oppressive and impolitic ; more especially the recent agreement of rent free estates throught he Presidency of Bengal.

Thus interested and thus occupied, it is a matter of sincere gratification to us to receive a visit from so distinguished a native of India as yourself and to be able to address you as we now do as a fellow citizen. We feel confident you will appreciate the importance of the interests we have espoused and, however humble our efforts may have been, do justice to the motives by which they have been inspired. We shall be grateful for your counsel in our future proceedings and be happy to receive from your lips whatever encouragement you feel warranted in affording us.

We take this opportunity of putting on record our conviction of the special and peculiar claims which you have to our respect and gratitude. As a stranger possessing no other title to our regard, we should as individuals have been prompt to extend to you a cordial welcome to the shores of Scotland.

But more than this—you come among (us) recommended by your own countrymen and authenticated by your own acts as the intelligent and generous promoter of many of the objects to which we as a society are devoted. In that land, to which our best wishes have been so often sent and to which our remote endeavours have been directed, you have long been distinguished by deeds of enlightened and enlarged philanthropy.

We recognise in you a friend of that knowledge which

confers dignity and power on its possessor and also a liberal promoter of the most extended plans for the education of the Youth of your country. We recognise in you a munificent patron and practical promoter of peaceful and unrestricted commerce ; of a system of trade calculated to bind nation to nation and man to man and to make the varied blessings of the Creator and the useful invention of genius universal in their benefits to the human race. We recognise in you the fearless assertor of the rights of human industry—at this moment striving to throw the shield of protection over the humblest cultivator of the soil of your birth and to secure for honest toil a just participation in the fruits of the field. We recognise in you a generous supporter and in some instances the founder of the institutions of your own metropolis which have been established for the humane purpose of mitigating the sorrows and the sufferings of your indigent and afflicted countrymen.

Finally, we recognise in you a zealous advocate of just and equal laws for all classes of the vast community to which you belong. Accept then the only recompense we have it in our power to offer, the sincere tribute of our admiration and esteem. You have lived and laboured for the good of mankind and it (is) but just you should receive our thanks in the name of common humanity. For the future we offer you our assistance and cooperation. We all do what we can by the diffusion of information to create a deeper and more benevolent interest in favour of your country and trust you will be long spared to prosecute your truly noble enterprises in the cause of education and the establishment of those great principles of commerce and government, to the influence and triumph of which we look for the union the elevation and the happiness of the nations of the earth.

Our desire for the country of your birth, now dependent for its laws and its administration upon this, is through all coming time, its people may have reason to bless the inscrutable providence, that has linked your destinies and ours together.



Hitherto your country has been a scene of rapid and unparalleled conquests and the source of perennial and incalculable wealth to the people of Great Britain. But we deplore that in our career of conquest of gain, we have as a nation inflicted many and grievous wrongs upon the natives of India, though we would fain hope that at the same time, we have been the instruments for conferring some benefits. The period for the infliction of evil is, we trust, past. Henceforward, we would that our efforts should be confined exclusively to the reparation of injury and the correction of error and to the discharge of those solemn obligations under which our acquisition of your country has laid us.

Our desire is that the sword of conquest may be forever sheathed – that the rod of oppression may be forever broken and that the yoke of an unwilling subjection may be everywhere exchanged for a voluntary allegiance, perpetuated by a wise, a benevolent and an equitable administration of the government throughout all the provinces committed to our care.

In these desires we doubt not you will fervently join and as earnestly labour for their realisation.

And now honoured Sir, in taking our leave permit us to assure you that whenever you may depart from this country our best wishes will attend you and our constant prayer for your guidance, prosperity and happiness. We have unanimously elected you as an Honourary Member of our Society and trust that you will not decline to accept of this mark of the estimation in which we hold your character. We commend you to the care and keeping of the Maker and Preserver of men. Farewell.

On behalf of the Committee.

( J. Dunlop. )  
Secretary.

(N. Memyss)  
Chairman

(E. M. Cruickshank)  
Secretary

Edinburgh, September 8, 1842.





Gautam Chattopadhyay is a well-known name among marxist and progressive historians. For the past two decades, he has been seriously engaged in historical investigations connected with both what is known as the Bengal Renaissance in the Nineteenth Century, as well as the history of the Communist Movement in Bengal. In 1965, he edited a volume : *Awakening in Bengal in Early Nineteenth Century*, containing the Proceedings of the Derozian Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge in Bengal. He has written a whole chain of books and monographs on the history of the Communist Movement, some of his major works being : *Communism and Bengal's Freedom Movement, Vol. I : 1917—29* ; *Subhas Chandra Bose and the CPI ( 1973 )* ; *Abani Mukherjee ( 1976 )* ; *Lenin in Contemporary Bengali Press ( 1969 )* ; and others. His latest work, *Bengal : Electoral Politics and Freedom Struggle ; 1862—1947*, currently awaits publication, is a detailed study as well as depth analysis from the marxian point of view.

*Jacket : S. Ratan*

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